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RANDALL THOMPSON'S REQUIEM:
A TEXT SETTING ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE

by

Zachary James Vreeman

A Doctoral Document

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Major: Music

Under the Supervision of Professor Therees Tkach Hibbard

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 2011

RANDALL THOMPSON'S REQUIEM:
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Zachary James Vreeman, D.M.A.

University of Nebraska, 2011

Advisor: Therees Tkach Hibbard

Randall Thompson is a well-known composer of some of the most familiar and accessible American choral music of the twentieth century. His conservative harmonic language and idiomatic writing for voices has made many of his works popular with both amateur and academic choirs. They are particularly admired for their sensitive setting of English text.

In 1958, Thompson wrote a large work titled *Requiem*, inspired by a young terminally-ill choral conductor, and commissioned by the University of California. Though positively reviewed, it received only a handful of performances, and is little known today outside of a few extracted movements. The *Requiem* is Thompson's largest unaccompanied work, an hour-long dramatic dialogue between two choirs on the topic of life and death.

The primary focus of this study is an extensive analysis of Thompson's marriage of text and music in the *Requiem*, coupled with a thorough discussion of the background of the work based on dozens of Thompson's personal letters. Through this analysis it is shown that the *Requiem* can be viewed as more than a neglected work—it is Randall Thompson's masterpiece in text selection and setting. Thompson assembled an original libretto from a wide variety of Biblical passages, creating a cohesive musical structure and personal reflection on death. Each phrase of text is expertly set in terms of prosody, affect, and dramatic purpose, resulting in a uniquely American interpretation of the

Requiem form. It is further concluded that the *Requiem* is worthy of revival and that many of the reasons for its lack of initial success are rooted in non-musical factors, such as the size and expense of the score. In closing, favorable performance recommendations are given to help facilitate the *Requiem* receiving many future performances.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this document has been a thoroughly enjoyable experience, and was made possible by more people than I could mention in this brief acknowledgement. There are, however, certain people who have been helpful in specific ways that I would like to thank individually.

I thank the members of my supervisory committee: Dr. Therees Hibbard, Dr. Pete Eklund, Dr. Stan Kleppinger, and Dr. Julia Schleck. You have each enriched the last three years of my life in a unique way, and I know that I will carry your influences with me throughout my career.

The significant primary-source research that was a part of this study could not have happened without the aid of several people: Dr. Giacomo Oliva, and the generous grant funding from the Hixson-Lied Endowment; Leslie Morris, curator of the Modern Books and Manuscripts collection at Houghton Library, for the permission to view the voluminous Randall Thompson collection; and the staff at Houghton Library, who were very helpful and courteous at all times. With respect to my primary-source research, no one deserves more thanks than my new-found colleague Carl Schmidt. He and his wife Betsey have been helpful in too many ways to list here.

I also extend appreciation also to Robert Schuneman and ECS Publishing, for welcoming me personally in Boston, providing me with research materials, and for granting me permission to include the many musical examples.

A few more people deserve thanks as well for helping guide me on this point in my educational journey: Dr. Ben Kornelis, for introducing me to the *Requiem* by

programming *Ye were sometimes darkness* for the Dordt College choir tour in 2001, and for being an excellent mentor and colleague all these years; Dr. Grant Cochran, for being an important mentoring conductor during my years in Anchorage; and my many other teachers who guided and encouraged me toward a career in music.

And, of course, my greatest thanks to my family. I would not be submitting this document had my grandmother not provided for my piano lessons so many years ago. My love for music and choirs began with my parents, who have supported and encouraged me my entire life in so many ways—words are not sufficient to thank you enough. Thanks also to my parents-in-law, who have made three years of graduate school far easier for my family than they could have been. And of course Meagan, my ever-supportive and loving wife, thank you for putting up with me and my busyness these last months and years. I would never have been to do this without you and the children smiling at me every day.

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PREFACE

This document was prepared with the style sheet found in *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, seventh edition, by Kate L. Turabian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). Bibliographic entries are written in the notes-bibliography style.

For musical terms, abbreviations, and other field-specific items not addressed by the Turabian style sheet, the document is formatted according to *Writing About Music: A Style Sheet*, second edition, by D. Kern Holoman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). The structural complexity of Randall Thompson's *Requiem* (hereafter referred to as Thompson's *Requiem*, or simply the *Requiem*) presents an issue not addressed in either style sheet with respect to titles. The work is titled *Requiem*, and is not a setting of the Requiem Mass text, so its title appears throughout the document in italicized type. The *Requiem* is also composed of five parts, each with its own title, and four of the five parts consist of several individually-titled movements as well. Both Turabian and Holoman indicate that titles of sub-sections of a work should be given in quotations, so Parts I-V are referenced in that manner (e.g. Part II, "The Triumph of Faith"). What neither style sheet anticipates is the titling of movements within sub-sections. Throughout this document, the titles of individual movements will be referenced as would individual works, in italics, preserving their capitalization from the score. This is logical and improves clarity for the following reasons: 1) movement titles appear more frequently in the prose than the titles of Parts I-V; 2) movement titles could easily be confused with phrases of text given in quotations, 3) several of the movements were

published and are performed as separate pieces, and 4) Holoman implies flexibility by saying “for parallelism or owing to context, consider elevating the quoted level to italics” (Holoman, *Writing About Music*, p. 4).

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INTRODUCTION

Randall Thompson (1899-1984) is a well-known composer of American choral music. Several of his works have achieved iconic status, owing to their sensitive text setting, idiomatic writing for amateur voices, attractive harmonic language, and also Thompson's own graciousness towards musicians.¹ Thompson's creative focus for much of his career was writing choral music, but he also wrote symphonic and chamber music. He was an ardent supporter of distinctly American music throughout his career, and composed one of America's most popular patriotic choral works, *The Testament of Freedom*. Many choirs know Thompson and his individual style through smaller works such as *The Last Words of David*; movements from *Frostiana*; and *Alleluia* (which currently has over three million copies in print).² Apart from his work as a composer, Thompson was a career educator and administrator, holding positions at six different institutions including Harvard University, where he spent the last sixteen years of his teaching career.

One of Thompson's specific strengths was finding unique texts with which to work. He set texts by notable American poets, such as Stephen Vincent Benét and Robert Frost, but was especially skilled at selecting and setting prose, both sacred and secular. *Americana* and *The Testament of Freedom* are multi-movement works composed of secular texts drawn from magazines and letters, respectively. He also found unique

¹ Carl Schmidt, *The Story of Randall Thompson's Alleluia Revisited: A Facsimile Edition with Commentary*, (Boston: E. C. Schirmer Music Corporation, 2010), 1. Schmidt mentions four works that he considers to be in the "iconic" category: *The Testament of Freedom*, *Alleluia*, *The Last Words of David*, and *Frostiana*.

² Ibid., 27.

biblical texts, represented in works like *The Peaceable Kingdom* and *Requiem*, which are composed on texts almost completely ignored by other contemporary composers.

While *The Peaceable Kingdom* is frequently performed today, Thompson's *Requiem* is relatively unknown. It is much longer than *The Peaceable Kingdom*, and was written while Thompson was on sabbatical from Harvard during the 1957-58 academic year. The *Requiem* has a unique history: it was inspired by a terminally-ill colleague; commissioned by a chorus Thompson founded at the University of California; and was his most ambitious choral work to date. Thompson's *Requiem* is not a setting of the Requiem Mass text; instead, it is a dramatic concert work written for double chorus. The work is a cappella and lasts slightly more than an hour. For the text, Thompson created a dialogue between the two choirs out of dozens of carefully-chosen passages of scripture. The choirs were given distinct characters to play in the drama: one choir represents the souls of the faithful, and the other, mourners in need of comfort.

The purpose of this study is to explore the complex relationship between text and music in Thompson's *Requiem*, and by doing so determine whether it is a work worthy of revival. If Thompson's talent for sensitive text setting is as well-represented in the *Requiem* as it is in his other works, then it is worthy of further study. Neglected works by composers whose pieces are otherwise legendary deserve this level of attention, because lack of success can be the result of several causes. Lack of musical quality and other internal features can cause a piece's failure, but so can many external factors. In the case of Thompson's *Requiem*, it will be argued that the external pressures were far more powerful, and that the music itself is worthy of being heard.

To sufficiently explore the *Requiem* and the many influences on its success, the study will first introduce Randall Thompson in a brief biographical sketch to provide the appropriate context for discussing a specific work. Following the biography is a discussion of the complex background of the *Requiem*. Many of the essential features of the work are rooted in Thompson's initial dramatic conception, which was inspired by the death of a friend, Frederick Pratt II. In addition to the inspiration, the commission for the work influenced its ultimate form. Thompson's approach to constructing the work is well-documented and his methods show both inspiration and excellent craftsmanship. Also, many of the causes for the *Requiem*'s lack of success are rooted in non-musical elements, such as the conditions of the first performances and the publication history. The background section will examine first the work's impetus, commission, performances, publication history, and finally provide a brief philosophical sketch of what the *Requiem* may have meant to Randall Thompson. This background is established through primary sources, including input from dozens of personal letters, speeches, and articles concerning the *Requiem*.

With a firm grounding in the history, background, and compositional approach to the work, an analysis of Thompson's text setting of the *Requiem* is presented. The background confirms that text is a central feature of this piece, and thus influenced the overall structure of the work and the choice of performing ensemble. An analysis from the perspective of text setting is most appropriate because Randall Thompson's ability to sensitively set text was one of his greatest strengths.³ Elliot Forbes summarized the excellence in Thompson's text setting by saying that "...every phrase of text [is set] into

³ Elliot Forbes, "The Music of Randall Thompson," *The Musical Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (Jan. 1949): 9.

a texture of voices that serves not only to sound the words but also to bring out their meaning by a particular choral color,” and that musical lines have “the rhythmic equivalent in music to the natural rhythms of the words when spoken.” Forbes went further to say that Thompson’s text setting was excellent on a larger formal structure, saying that in the linking of phrases “Thompson gets gradations of punctuation in musical terms which interpret and enhance those at the disposal of the poet.”⁴ This evaluation of Thompson’s choral settings in general match neatly with how Thompson described his approach to text setting, which was to allow each line of text to “lead him by the hand.”⁵ For the *Requiem*, an analysis of text setting has even greater depth—because Thompson carefully assembled this particular text himself, the assembly itself is worth analyzing as well. Though the text remains the starting point, the analysis addresses issues of large and small scale formal structures, key relationships, melodic shapes, prosody, dynamics, and other relevant musical features. The analysis is divided into five parts, one for each part of the *Requiem*, and each chapter contains sections addressing dramatic intent, musical features, and performance considerations.

The document concludes with a synthesis of the background and all that is revealed in the conductor’s analysis. The *Requiem* can be viewed as more than just a neglected work—it is Randall Thompson’s masterpiece in text selection and setting. Each phrase of text is expertly set in terms of prosody, affect, and dramatic purpose in every compositional feature. In an attempt to alleviate some of the challenges that keep the work from being performed, suggestions are offered regarding ensemble selection, ideal

⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁵ Byron McGilvray, “The Choral Music of Randall Thompson: An American Eclectic” (DMA diss., University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1979), 31.

performance situations, and unexplored publication options. The musical quality and uniqueness clearly show the *Requiem* to be a work worthy of revival and it is hoped that this analysis and accompanying recommendations will help it to someday enter the regular repertory of American choirs.

PART I: BACKGROUND

Chapter 1: Biographical Sketch

In 1974, James Haar, a former student of Randall Thompson, wrote that Thompson's oeuvre was a "monument of calm integrity in a musically turbulent half-century."⁶ This description is as appropriate a metaphor for his music as it was for the man himself. In his lengthy career as a composer, educator, and administrator, Randall Thompson continually displayed a commitment to musical and curricular ideals established early in his life. His mature compositional style is seen in his early works and remained consistent throughout his career. This stability was also reflected in his teaching career by means of an unswerving dedication to a liberal-arts philosophy, and in his personal life through his enduring investment of friendship and correspondence with many life-long friends.

For a composer who was committed to seeing American music come into its own in the post-romantic era,⁷ the details of his birth are a fitting coincidence. Ira Randall Thompson was born only months before the close of the nineteenth century on April 21, 1899, in New York City, a persistent creative center of American music. He would return to New York in the early part of his career, but spent his early childhood in New England.⁸ Thompson's parents both had family roots in Augusta, Maine, and his family

⁶ James Haar, "Randall Thompson and the Music of the Past," in *Randall Thompson: A Choral Legacy*, ed. Alfred Mann (Boston: E. C. Schirmer, 1983), 49.

⁷ Randall Thompson, "The Contemporary Scene in American Music," *The Musical Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (Jan. 1932): 12. In this article, Thompson passionately urged American composers to work towards a style that was uniquely American, not dependent on the "European yardstick" for its approval.

⁸ McGilvray, "The Choral Music of Randall Thompson," 1.

spent their summers north of there in the village of Vienna. Randall's father, Daniel Varney Thompson, moved the family to New Jersey in 1904 where he had obtained a position at the Lawrenceville School as an English teacher. In addition to his father teaching, his parents served as house parents for one of the dormitories at the school, which was modeled on the English house system.⁹ Thompson's father encouraged his study of literature, which was bolstered by the classical liberal-arts curriculum Randall received at the Lawrenceville School. While there, Thompson "acquired a decent grounding in literature, Latin, German, and the Bible,"¹⁰ made several life-long friends, and wrote his first music.

Music was always part of the daily life in the Thompson family. His father sang, his mother played the piano well, and the family would often sing Scottish folk songs together in the evenings.¹¹ Randall became interested in music around the age of ten, some of his first experiences being with the melodeon in Vienna during their family summers there.¹² Thompson studied with various keyboard teachers over the next several years, the most significant of which was Francis Cuyler van Dyck, a mathematics teacher at Lawrenceville and organist for the daily chapel services.¹³ When van Dyck became too ill to continue playing, Thompson substituted for him and became the daily organist for

⁹ McGilvray, "The Choral Music of Randall Thompson," 1.

¹⁰ Carl Schmidt, "The Unknown Randall Thompson: 'Honkeytonk Tunesmith, Broadway Ivory-Tickler,'" *American Music* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 303.

¹¹ McGilvray, "The Choral Music of Randall Thompson," 3.

¹² Caroline Cepin Benser and David Francis Urrows, *Randall Thompson: A Bio-Bibliography* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 5.

the duration of his senior year. By this time, Randall had already decided on a career as a musician, and enrolled at Harvard in the fall of 1916.¹⁴ Thompson recalled:

Even as a small child I felt that this [music] would be my career. I can remember before I went away to college, my parents asked me what I wanted to be, and I said I wanted to be a musician. They said, “Well, of course, music will be an avocation for you, but we don’t think you’d want it for a profession.” I agreed, but I knew deep down that my mind was all made up completely. I’d simply be that in life. I’d be a professional musician.¹⁵

Thompson took from his Harvard years several influences that would remain with him for his entire career. The first was the structure of the music curriculum itself, which could be described as “a compact curriculum...and was a fair representative of musical liberal arts training of its time.”¹⁶ Musical performance was treated as an extra-curricular activity that occurred as the natural outgrowth of students being educated in the liberal art of music. Because of this curricular orientation, no applied musical experiences—such as ensembles and private lessons—received degree credit. Awarding credit for ensembles was something that Thompson would argue against in *College Music* and continue to defend throughout his career.¹⁷ A second influence on Thompson was the philosophy faculty at Harvard, including then Professor Emeritus George Herbert Palmer, whose philosophy of ethics called the individual to work within and for the harmony of society. To Palmer, a conviction of conscience or self-motivation were not in themselves valid

¹⁴ McGilvray, “The Choral Music of Randall Thompson,” 4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

¹⁶ Benser and Urrows, *Randall Thompson: A Bio-Bibliography*, 6.

¹⁷ Randall Thompson, *College Music: An Investigation for the Association of American Colleges*, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1935). Thompson surveyed college music programs across the United States for the Association of American Colleges, and in his report offered several recommendations, including not awarding credit for ensembles.

reasons for human endeavor.¹⁸ Thompson showed a similar personal conviction by writing almost exclusively on commission during his career¹⁹ and by writing music with a special attention to his audience.²⁰

The third major Harvard influence was Archibald (“Doc”) Davison, then director of the Harvard Glee Club. Thompson auditioned for the group and was rejected, but he still had access to Davison (and choral music) by participating in afternoon singing sessions that were part of Davison’s course on the history of choral music. During these sessions, Thompson was exposed to a wide range of repertoire “from plainchant and Dufay to Debussy chansons.”²¹ Davison also taught counterpoint and served as critic for Thompson’s early compositions. After interviewing Thompson in 1975, Byron McGilvray wrote that

Thompson credits Archibald Davison for helping him develop and refine his artistry, musicianship, and taste. Davison was a perfectionist and his refusal to accept second-rate work made an indelible impression on the young composer. His conducting technique, his sense of balance, timing, and proportion, and his ability to inspire people to sing impressed Thompson so much that Davison remains the person who had the greatest musical influence on the composer.²²

It is notable that “balance, timing, and proportion” are mentioned as specific influences, because in terms of musical composition, those features would be especially pertinent to

¹⁸ Ibid., 7.

¹⁹ McGilvray, “The Choral Music of Randall Thompson,” 29.

²⁰ Elliot Forbes, “The Music of Randall Thompson,” *The Musical Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (Jan. 1949): 1. “Thompson once stated his views about the relation of a composer to his public and the purpose for which the American composer should write. These two statements give an important clue to the nature of his music. In his address, *Music, Popular and Unpopular*, Thompson says that ‘a composer’s first responsibility is, and always will be, to write music that will reach and move the hearts of his listeners in his own day.’”

²¹ Elliot Forbes, “Americana,” in *Randall Thompson: A Choral Legacy*, ed. Alfred Mann (Boston: E. C. Schirmer, 1983), 66.

²² McGilvray, “The Choral Music of Randall Thompson,” 7.

composing a large work like the *Requiem*. In reference to Davison's influence, Thompson's long-time colleague Elliot Forbes added "the greatest impact that Davison had on him was the man's taste, his cultivation of the choral legato, and his adoration of the great choral literature."²³

Thompson was an active composer during his student years at Harvard, to an extent that sometimes reflected negatively in the grades he received for his required studies.²⁴ The effort was not without positive results, though, as Thompson won the Boott Prize for choral composition in 1919 for *The Light of Stars* and the Knight prize for instrumental composition the following year.²⁵

With a firm grounding in excellent choral literature and the seeds of a career in composition, Thompson graduated from Harvard in 1920 and moved to New York. Thompson continued his education by studying privately with Ernest Bloch. Specific features of Bloch's style are apparent in several of Thompson's experimental works of the time, but the lasting influence of this short period was that "Bloch made upon his student a vital imprint of professionalism about composition and the act of composing..."²⁶ with an emphasis on acquiring the ability of self-critique.²⁷ After a year in New York City, Thompson returned to Harvard to pursue a Master of Arts degree in composition. The study lasted one year, supplying him additional instruction specifically

²³ Forbes, "Americana," 66.

²⁴ McGilvray, "The Choral Music of Randall Thompson," 8.

²⁵ The Boott and Knight prizes are privately funded annual prizes awarded to Harvard students for choral and instrumental compositions, respectively. Harvard University Department of Music, "Harvard University and New England Conservatory Five-year AB/MM Program in Music." <http://music.fas.harvard.edu/mmperformance.html> (accessed March 5, 2011).

²⁶ Forbes, "Americana," 66.

²⁷ McGilvray, "The Choral Music of Randall Thompson," 9.

in orchestration, and Thompson graduated from Harvard for the second time in the spring of 1922.

Thus ended Randall Thompson's formal education in America, but during the spring he graduated Thompson had applied for and won a three-year fellowship to the American Academy in Rome. There were three fellowships in all; the other two had been awarded to Leo Sowerby and Howard Hanson. The award granted him a generous stipend, and Thompson was able to travel extensively through Europe when he was not actively studying and composing at the Academy.

He spent much of his first year in Rome analyzing works of Bach and Beethoven. In addition to his counterparts Sowerby and Hanson, Thompson quickly met and made friends with several important musical figures such as Gustav Holst, Ottorino Respighi, and Fernando Remacha.²⁸ The most influential of these friendships was with Gian Francesco Malipiero, who was at the time editing the complete works of Claudio Monteverdi. Thompson visited Malipiero frequently at his home in Asolo. In his biography, David Francis Urrows identified three important effects that Malipiero had on Thompson: first, he impressed on Thompson the primacy of vocal and choral music; second, he introduced Thompson to the works of Monteverdi; and third, Malipiero "leavened Thompson's style" with his own neo-classicism.²⁹ Thompson also mentioned several times that he had been influenced by hearing live performances of madrigal cycles by Vecchi and other Renaissance masters. He was inspired by the dramatic use of

²⁸ Ibid., 11.

²⁹ Benser and Urrows, *Randall Thompson: A Bio-Bibliography*, 13.

a cappella choruses in this genre, an interest that would guide the structure of later works such as *The Peaceable Kingdom* and *Requiem*.³⁰

Studying in Europe was a great opportunity for Thompson, a dedicated student of the liberal arts. Thompson read extensively in English and other languages, and was introduced to the poetry of Horace by a fellow American and linguist, Huntington Brown.³¹ Thompson was inspired by the Latin poetry, and Horace's ancient farm near Rome, and composed the *Odes of Horace*, which were first performed in May of 1925 in Italy. They are the only mature choral works in his repertoire that were not written on commission or for a particular event. In the orchestral medium, his tone poem *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* of 1924 was the most significant work from this period.³²

Upon his return to the United States in 1925, Randall Thompson moved to New York City and began to build an income through his composition. He taught piano, wrote solo songs, and supplied music for two off-Broadway shows (*Grand Street Follies* and *The Straw Hat*).³³ In this brief period of homecoming, he also met Margaret Whitney, whom he married on April 27, 1927.

Perhaps in a bid for financial security for his new family, Thompson began what would be a life-long career in higher education, accepting a position at Wellesley College (Wellesley, Massachusetts) for the fall of 1927. After some initial unease due to

³⁰ Randall Thompson, "Notes on a *Requiem*," in *Randall Thompson: A Choral Legacy*, ed. Alfred Mann (Boston: E. C. Schirmer, 1983), 35.

³¹ Benser and Urrows, *Randall Thompson: A Bio-Bibliography*, 12. Horace was also known as Quintus Horatius Flaccus.

³² *Ibid.*, 13.

³³ For more information about this particular formative year in Thompson's early career, see Carl Schmidt, "The Unknown Randall Thompson: 'Honkeytonk Tunesmith, Broadway Ivory-Tickler,'" *American Music* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 302-326.

Wellesley being an all-girls school, he spent the next two years there as organist and choirmaster.³⁴ The combination of his responsibilities at the school and the birth of his first daughter left little time for composition, but he did find enough time to compose the treble double-choir motet *Pueri Hebraeorum* for his choir at Wellesley. Despite this slowdown in output, some of his compositions of the previous several years were gaining notoriety. Hanson gave American premiere performances of several of Thompson's instrumental works at the Eastman School of Music. Thompson also met Serge Koussevitsky for the first time in 1928, who subsequently performed *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* with the Boston Symphony in the spring of 1929.³⁵

By the time Thompson left Wellesley in the spring of 1929, he had already secured a Guggenheim fellowship for the coming year. The fellowship was renewed for a second year, so Thompson was able to travel to Europe and focus on composing for two years. He had intended to spend the time in Paris, but after a short time left there for Gstaad, Switzerland in search of a more peaceful environment. Gstaad, a small alpine town, proved to be an ideal environment for Thompson to compose, and consequently became the Thompson's summer home. Eventually the Thompsons bought property there and (after 1930) many of Thompson's works were composed there.³⁶

During the Guggenheim period, Thompson began his association with unique American texts in *Rosemary* (1930), a series of unaccompanied choruses for women's voices on texts of Stephen Vincent Benét. At the same time, Thompson also wrote his

³⁴ McGilvray, "The Choral Music of Randall Thompson," 12.

³⁵ Benser and Urrows, *Randall Thompson: A Bio-Bibliography*, 17.

³⁶ McGilvray, "The Choral Music of Randall Thompson," 13.

Second Symphony, which would prove to be his most frequently-performed orchestral work.

Thompson came back from Europe but did not immediately return to teaching. In the fall of 1931 he took over for the ailing Margarethe Dessoff to direct the Dessoff Choirs in New York City. For this ensemble he had the opportunity to write his first thoroughly American choral work, *Americana* (1932), which satirically set odd prose texts from the *American Mercury* magazine. This was Thompson's first major setting of American English prose, and Thompson had chosen excerpts from the magazine that represented several aspects of American life.³⁷

American music in general was in a period of discovery, as composers tried to forge a distinct American tradition separate from European roots. Thompson had been included in a collection of seventeen composers that Aaron Copland called "America's young men of promise" in 1926.³⁸ In 1932 Thompson wrote an article in *The Musical Quarterly* about the current state of American music, suggesting that American composers stop looking to Europe for approval and to capitalize on the unique source material that American composers have in jazz, spirituals, and hymnody:

Our musical Solons say to themselves, "We enjoy it, but would it go in Europe?" It might not. But when shall we stop seeking the European stamp of approval? Does Europe await our endorsement of things European? The European yardstick is no measure for the things we do, and we shall never achieve artistic autonomy so long as we employ a foreign unit of measure.³⁹

³⁷ McGilvray, "The Choral Music of Randall Thompson," 90. McGilvray summarized the "aspects" addressed by each movement as "fundamentalism, the occult, temperance, capital punishment, and the search for happiness."

³⁸ Aaron Copland, "America's Young Men of Promise," *Modern Music* 3, no. 3 (March-April 1926): 13-20. Copland had commented specifically on Thompson's precision and craftsmanship in his compositions: "Each one of Thompson's compositions is finished with a most meticulous pen—not an eighth note which does not receive full consideration before it is put on paper."

³⁹ Randall Thompson, "The Contemporary Scene," 12.

To Thompson, one of the major hindrances he saw to the creation of an American school was the “cult of the individual,” in which American composers sought to allow no comparison or similarity to be found between each other, thus silencing any coherent voice for American music.⁴⁰

This passion for a uniquely American artistic expression would influence the rest of Thompson’s career, both as a composer and academic. For the following three academic years (1932-35), Thompson conducted a survey of college music programs for the American Association of Colleges. In his report, published as *College Music* in 1935, Thompson vigorously defended the liberal-arts approach to college music teaching (as opposed to the focused training of the conservatory model). His recommendations were so biased towards liberal-arts that the supervising committee (which included Hanson) published statements of rebuttal at the close of several chapters of the book. Certain issues, such as the awarding of credit for lessons and ensembles, were the greatest divide between Thompson and the committee members. His views did resonate with some types of institutions, though, and Thompson was invited to be part of the visiting committee to revise the music curriculum at Harvard in 1935.⁴¹ As a future administrator of music departments, this three-year study provided him with voluminous evidence to convince him of the value of a liberal-arts approach to music.

The college music survey had afforded Thompson little time to compose, but during the publication process he was commissioned again by the League of Composers,

⁴⁰ Ibid., 10.

⁴¹ Benser and Urrows, *Randall Thompson: A Bio-Bibliography*, 21.

this time for a work to be performed by the Harvard Glee Club and Radcliffe Choral Society. The resulting work, *The Peaceable Kingdom* (1936), was Thompson's greatest achievement in the choral medium to that point.⁴² Modeled on Vecchi's madrigal comedy *L'Amfiparnoso*, *The Peaceable Kingdom* dramatically set a collection of prophetic texts from the book of Isaiah. The text assembly is one of the keys to the work's effect, a compositional process that would be equally important in later sacred works such as *Requiem*, *The Nativity According to St. Luke*, and *The Passion According to St. Luke*.⁴³

Over the next ten years (1936-46), Thompson returned to higher education, but failed to settle into a career position. He returned to Wellesley in the fall of 1936, this time as a professor of composition, but stayed only one year. From 1937-39 Thompson taught at the University of California (today known as the University of California, Berkeley), where he started the University of California Chorus. In 1939 he obtained his first administrative position, being appointed director of the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Unfortunately, Thompson and the Curtis Institute proved to be an ideological mismatch. As director, he made attempts to bring the conservatory's curriculum more in line with his liberal-arts philosophy, but was met with stiff opposition from students and the board of directors. After two tumultuous years, he resigned from Curtis and sought another academic position. In the summer between these two years at Curtis, Thompson wrote *Alleluia* (1940) for the opening of the Berkshire Music Center, a small work which would become his most popular.⁴⁴

⁴² Forbes, "The Music of Randall Thompson," 15.

⁴³ Ibid., 15; McGilvray, "The Choral Music of Randall Thompson," 31.

⁴⁴ Carl Schmidt, *Alleluia Revisited*, 27.

Thompson was named head of the music department at the University of Virginia in the fall of 1941, and remained there until the fall of 1945. While there, he wrote *The Testament of Freedom* (1943), which garnered enormous popular enthusiasm. This musical tribute to Thomas Jefferson on the occasion of his bicentennial also had a timely message of advancing liberty during a world war. However, the simplicity and popular appeal of *The Testament of Freedom* did not win Thompson approval from critics, who found his attention to the needs of his audience in this type of work to be uncreative pandering.⁴⁵ Even so, *The Testament of Freedom* has been the largest of Thompson's works to receive continuous performance, and was eventually re-orchestrated for various ensembles including versions for mixed chorus, full orchestra, and wind band. This particular work also shows Thompson's sensitivity to audience and purpose when he was composing on commission.⁴⁶

After another short-lived position of two years at Princeton, Thompson became a professor of music at Harvard in the fall of 1948. It was his sixth position in twelve years, but he was ideologically at home, remaining at Harvard for the rest of his career. He was chair of the department from 1952 until 1957 and became professor emeritus in 1965. Thompson found little time to compose during the academic year, but wrote several works during the summers in Gstaad. In the late 1950s, Thompson began writing more large works, including the *Mass of the Holy Spirit* (completed in 1956) and the *Ode to the Virginia Voyage* (1957),⁴⁷ both large works in English. These were followed by the

⁴⁵ Benser and Urrows, *Randall Thompson: A Bio-Bibliography*, 29. "Thompson has often been criticized for this work. Its enormous popularity hurt him after the war, when it was held up to ridicule and misrepresented as a characteristically maudlin work by a second-rate mind."

⁴⁶ Forbes, "The Music of Randall Thompson," 20.

⁴⁷ Commissioned for the 350th anniversary of the first permanent English settlement in the New World.

Requiem—by far the largest of Thompson’s a cappella works—written during his 1957-58 sabbatical.

Thompson taught for six more years after his sabbatical, and during breaks he composed several more large and small works, all on commission. Thompson received numerous commission requests, and several of those he accepted were for the purpose of celebrating anniversaries. *The Nativity According to St. Luke* (1961) was composed for the 200th anniversary of Christ Church in Cambridge, where Thompson was a member, and *The Passion According to St. Luke* (1964) celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston. The most well-known of the anniversary commissions was *Frostiana* (1959), for the 200th anniversary of the charter of Amherst, Massachusetts. Due to the popularity of *The Testament of Freedom*, Thompson’s pen was sought for settings of several patriotic texts, including the Gettysburg Address. So many commissions came that he simply did not have time for many of them, and for that and other reasons “he turned down requests for over ninety commissions offered to him between the late 1930s and the year of his death.”⁴⁸

Randall Thompson’s retirement from teaching may have afforded him some freedom, but he filled his time with many guest appearances, lectures, and more commissions. He wrote several small sacred works, but also wrote three more choral-orchestral works: *A Psalm of Thanksgiving* (1967), *The Place of the Blest* (1969), and finally *A Concord Cantata* (1975). This last piece was written, like *Frostiana*, for the bicentennial of a community, in this case Concord, Massachusetts. The last of the three sections is a setting of Robert Frost’s *The Gift Outright*, which was the poem originally

⁴⁸ Carl Schmidt, *Alleluia Revisited*, 1.

requested for the Amherst commission. Thompson had rejected that text and selected other Frost poems instead, because he felt revolutionary overtones were inappropriate for that event. The celebration in Concord had a different history, and Thompson felt the text appropriate in this case.⁴⁹ By rejecting the poem for Amherst, and then using it for Concord, Thompson showed how deeply he considered texts and their purpose, caring enough to reject a text desired by the commissioners because he felt that it didn't match the purpose of their celebration.

A stroke in 1976 forced Thompson to employ help in the form of secretaries to service the large amounts of correspondence he received. Though his mental capacities remained intact, the physical act of writing had become difficult. One man in particular, David Francis Urrows, worked for Thompson periodically between 1976 and 1981 in exchange for composition lessons. He helped with correspondence and also in preparing several works for publication, some of which had been earlier works unearthed while assembling a collection of Thompson's manuscripts. The manuscript collection was given to the Houghton Library at Harvard University in 1978.⁵⁰

In his retirement years, Thompson continued to be honored by institutions and people he had influenced during his career. Tribute concerts of his music were given in numerous places, including Harvard in 1972, and Springfield, Massachusetts, for his eightieth birthday. Thompson had received his first honorary doctorate in 1933 from the University of Rochester, and in retirement added others from the University of Pennsylvania (1969) and the New England Conservatory (1975). The *American Choral*

⁴⁹ Randall Thompson, remarks before performance of "Choose Something Like a Star" from *Frostiana*, (First-Plymouth Congregational Church, Lincoln, Nebraska, December 14, 1975).

⁵⁰ Benser and Urrows, *Randall Thompson: A Bio-Bibliography*, 41.

Review published a special issue in 1974 dedicated to Thompson's music, which was expanded and published separately in 1980.

This popularity did not come without a cost. Thompson's conservative harmonic language, tuneful melodies, and success in amateur circles has led to a general dismissal from critics and academic circles.⁵¹ This is a result not of any compositional inadequacy on Thompson's part, but rather a philosophical choice. Early in his career, Thompson recognized an unrealized "market" for choral composers:

The rise of the NEW AMATEUR seems to me to possess a value...the importance of which cannot be over-emphasized.... I wish our composers wrote in a style more generally useful to amateurs. And if permanent as well as changing values interest you as educators, I hope that you will do all in your power to foster the amateur spirit.⁵²

He continued that message in a speech that he gave several times later in his career titled "Writing for the Amateur Chorus: a Chance and a Challenge."

Writing for voices shows, for instance, quicker than anything else...the *shortcomings in a composer's technique*; one reason why we have no "school" of choral composers...may be that our young composers haven't acquired sufficient technical equipment....many of the greatest composers' greatest works are choral, and they can all be sung by amateurs.... If a piece is too difficult for amateurs to sing, the chances are that it is not good enough.⁵³

Randall Thompson died in July of 1984 at the age of eighty-five. Since his death several works have persisted as mainstays of the American choral repertoire while others have receded. He has maintained a legacy as an important figure in American music and

⁵¹ Fredric Woodbridge Wilson, "Thompson, Randall," in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.library.unl.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/27881> (accessed March 6, 2011).

⁵² Randall Thompson, "An Evaluation of Our Musical Life," 1937, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70 Box 33: Folder "An Evaluation of our Musical Life"), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁵³ Randall Thompson, "Writing for the Amateur Chorus: A Chance and a Challenge," in *Randall Thompson: A Choral Legacy*, ed. Alfred Mann (Boston: E. C. Schirmer, 1983), 14.

higher education as well. The voluminous collection of papers given to the Houghton Library after his death show him to have been a dutiful correspondent and close friend to many people. In addition to the correspondents whose letters span decades, he received and answered numerous letters from people whom he had met only once but who were touched by his music. Even his relationship with his publisher was notable for its unusual dedication: all of his choral works were and are published by E. C. Schirmer, a small independent publisher in Boston who began publishing Thompson's works in 1924, and continued to publish works after his death. Despite criticism, Thompson's music has been sung by generations of amateur and professional singers in the United States and throughout the world, and continues to be a strong voice in American music history.

Chapter 2: Composition, Publication, and Performance History of the *Requiem*

For a composer as popular as Randall Thompson, works of his that failed the standard repertoire deserve a second look. He was a master at capturing the essence of a given text with an approachable musical language, and the neglected *Requiem* sets one of his most original and ambitious texts. Viewed in the context of his entire output, the *Requiem* is unique in its length (over an hour) and significant demand for choral resources (double chorus throughout, with *divisi*). But the history of the impetus, compositional process, premiere performances, and subsequent publication reveal a work that had deep personal importance to Thompson.

Before approaching the text-music relationship in the *Requiem* in detail, it is important to examine its history. Some of the early history is outlined briefly by Thompson himself in “Notes on a *Requiem*,” which he wrote for the 1974 special issue of *American Choral Review* that was compiled in his honor.⁵⁴ Many of the historical facts are drawn from dozens of letters to and from Thompson in reference to the work which span more than two decades. When coupled with other writings, speeches, and comments on text and composition, the *Requiem* can be seen as Thompson’s personal statement about the nature of death.

Frederick S. Pratt II and Beginnings

At the close of his article “Notes on a *Requiem*,” Randall Thompson added a brief section entitled “*L’envoi*” where he briefly describes meeting Frederick S. Pratt II, a young choral conductor with a terminal illness. Thompson wrote that Pratt had

⁵⁴ Randall Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” in *Randall Thompson: A Choral Legacy*, ed. Alfred Mann (Boston: E. C. Schirmer, 1983), 32-48.

...telephoned to ask if he might come to see me about getting some sort of conducting job. He had studied music at Harvard and at Yale and had recently returned from Copenhagen where, as a Fulbright Fellow, he had had an inspiring year of choral studies under the distinguished Dr. Morgens Wøldike. Fred wanted to share that experience with others. But he had just learned that he had only four to six months to live.⁵⁵

Thompson invited Pratt to his home for a visit, and though he was in the end unable to find him a job, Thompson found Pratt to have “the highest choral standards.”⁵⁶

Understandably, Pratt was anxious about what little time he had left, and Thompson remembered his words: “I’ve gotten so much out of music...I want to put something back into it.”⁵⁷

Thompson wrote Pratt a “couple of long letters about choral music and choral standards” over the summer. He recalled,

After returning home in the fall, I wrote again, to let him know that the things he had said in June had given me an idea for an extended choral work and that I was going to write it. This, I hoped, would give him the assurance that he had, in truth “put something back into music.”

The letter reached his house the day after he died. The *Requiem* was written in fulfillment of the promise the letter contained.⁵⁸

A copy of the letter itself in Thompson’s hand, dated November 5, 1954, is in the Randall Thompson collection at Houghton Library, Harvard and reads

Dear Mrs. Fisher,

Your letter with the wonderful message from Fred means a great deal to me. I have tried to telephone you without success. I wanted to give you and Fred my thanks and I send word to Fred that I am going to write a choral work embodying the fine ideas he gave me last spring and it will be dedicated gratefully to him.

⁵⁵ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 48.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Sincerely yours,

RT⁵⁹

Thompson gave no hints as to what “fine ideas” of Fred Pratt’s he planned to use in the writing of this potential work, but he said that he had been “looking for an elegiac text” since the summer of 1954, after he had met Pratt.⁶⁰ Two texts quoted in the London *Times* that summer drew his attention: the first was Psalm 21:4, “He asked life of Thee and Thou gavest him a long life;”⁶¹ and the second was 2 Samuel 19:35, “Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?” When looking for texts, Thompson said that he can “tell the minute I see a text whether I would like to set it or not,” and he save these two references.⁶² Like many composers, Thompson made a habit of collecting texts for future use whenever he found them, and encouraged young composers to read widely with an eye towards setting and keep their own text collections.⁶³

Thompson looked no further for texts at that point, instead focusing on the drama of the potential work. The texts he had found “led to thinking about the possibility of a dramatic work, for unaccompanied chorus, about life and death.”⁶⁴ *The Peaceable*

⁵⁹ Randall Thompson to “Mrs. Fisher,” November 5, 1954, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 28: Folder “University of California”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁶⁰ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 32.

⁶¹ As translated in the Book of Common Prayer.

⁶² McGilvray, “The Choral Music of Randall Thompson,” 31.

⁶³ Thompson, “Writing for the Amateur Chorus: A Chance and a Challenge,” 15. Sometimes it was years before Thompson would set a text that he had found. For example, *The Last Words of David*, composed in 1949, was a text that Thompson had discovered and saved during his College Music survey seventeen years earlier in 1932.

⁶⁴ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 33.

Kingdom was Thompson's first work that was written in this vein, and he made the connection between it and the *Requiem* directly:

The *Requiem* is an extension of the idea that prompted the writing of *The Peaceable Kingdom*. At the American Academy in Rome (1922-25), I heard beautiful performances of the madrigal sequences of Vecchi and Banchieri. Here was drama; here was unity of idea expressed through a succession of madrigals. Why not apply such means to the writing of a *sacred* work?⁶⁵

Though the two works are built on the same concept of genre (sacred madrigal sequence), their subject matters drove them to quite different results. *The Peaceable Kingdom* dealt with prophesy and judgment, delivered in a narrative; whereas the *Requiem* was addressed the issue of death, constructed as a dramatic dialogue between two characters.

A look at the characters in the drama shows the first major difference between *The Peaceable Kingdom* and *Requiem*. In the former, the chorus plays the role of prophet, and thus addresses all of their dramatic language in a descriptive way to a character outside of themselves. From the beginning, Thompson saw the *Requiem* drama evolving differently:

Obviously, if it was to be dramatic, there must be conflict. Since one choir alone could hardly convey the idea of conflict, I began thinking in terms of a double chorus, two forces in conflict with each other.⁶⁶

In the *Requiem*, the drama would play out between two characters from within the chorus, in dialogue with each other. Thompson had used significant amounts of double-chorus writing in *The Peaceable Kingdom*, but in a way more antiphonal than conflicting, with both choirs still operating as proponents of the same message. Thus, the double-chorus message was a narrative, not a conversation. The *Requiem* was meant to be a

⁶⁵ Ibid., 35.

⁶⁶ Thompson, "Notes on a *Requiem*," 33.

dramatic dialogue from the beginning, and Thompson planned the story of the drama before selecting any more than the first two texts. Thompson's lengthy description of the drama as conceived in the fall of 1954 shows features of the work that remained until the text and music was composed three years later:

Slowly it formed itself in my mind as being in five parts, in some ways not unlike the five acts of Elizabethan tragedy; and it would be cast in the form of a dramatic dialogue between the two choruses, one representing souls of the faithful; the other, mourners. I thought: Part I, *Lamentations*. The mourners grieve and no efforts of the faithful can console them. Part II, *The Triumph of Faith*. A debate on immortality, won in the end by the faithful through a mystic demonstration of eternal life. Part III, *The Call to Song*. With increasing intensity, the souls beseech the mourners to cast off grief through praising the Lord. Finally, in response to the souls' anguished cry, "Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?", the mourners break forth into song. Part IV, *The Garment of Praise*. A cumulative paean. Part V, *The Leave-taking*. The souls return to their rest and the mourners, all passion spent, submit to God's will and grieve no more for the loss of their loved one. "He asked life of thee and Thou gavest him a long life, even for ever and ever."⁶⁷

Thompson placed the two previously-collected texts as pillars in the drama: one for the most climactic central moment in the work, the other as the penultimate text in the dialogue (preceding only "Amen and amen, alleluia," used as an epilogue).

The comparison Thompson made to Elizabethan tragedy is worth noting, but was not realized precisely. The basic layout of the *Requiem* drama does follow a general scheme similar to tragedy: Part I (like Act I) introduces the actors and their conflict; in Part II the conflict is brought to the fore and acted out between the characters; Part III heightens the drama with increasing intensity; following a climax (at the end of Part III), Part IV is a resolution of the conflict; and in Part V, the story is culminated with the actors meeting their respective ends. In Elizabethan tragedy, the stories often end with many of significant characters dying. Instead, Thompson chose to end his tragedy with a

⁶⁷Ibid., 33.

positive note on death: after the souls of the dead have left, everyone rejoices together in a joyous “Amen and amen, alleluia.”

It is likely that the drama just described is the one that Thompson had in mind when he wrote to Fred Pratt on November 5, 1954. The planned *Requiem* proceeded no further at that point than this outline and two texts, but Thompson did appear to be looking for possible text and music ideas the following March. He wrote to Fred Pratt’s father, Frederick T. (“Ted”) Pratt and asked for a copy of the texts used in his son’s memorial service, as well as a listing of the organ works that were played. Ted Pratt sent a letter with the requested items to Thompson on March 23, 1955.⁶⁸ Thompson bracketed several passages from the funeral service, but none of those texts appeared in the final work, nor did references to any of the music.⁶⁹ Though Thompson did not use any funeral music specifically, Frederick S. Pratt II and his family remained an important inspiration in the composing of the *Requiem*. He honored them specifically at the Harvard premiere in 1959 and sent them one of the first published copies.⁷⁰

The Commission

By early 1955, Randall Thompson had a fully-formed concept of a dramatic work for double chorus in his mind, but did not yet have the opportunity to compose it. Since he worked almost exclusively on commission, he waited until he was offered one that matched his plans. About two years later, David Boyden, chairman of the music

⁶⁸ Ted Pratt to Randall Thompson, March 23, 1955, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 28: Folder “University of California”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁶⁹ “Funeral Service for Frederick S. Pratt II,” Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 28: Folder “University of California”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁷⁰ Ted Pratt to Randall Thompson, May 30, 1958, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 28: Folder “University of California”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

department at the University of California (now the University of California, Berkeley), was in the process of commissioning works for a festival to celebrate the opening of their new music building, and wrote to Thompson about the possibility of composing a work.

Thompson had spent two years teaching at the University of California, Berkeley from 1939-41, and founded the University Chorus while he was there. Thompson had just led a building project at Harvard, and knew about the new University of California music building because he still regularly corresponded with William Denny, a musicologist who had joined the University of California faculty while Thompson was there.⁷¹

To celebrate this new music building at the University of California, Berkeley, Boyden planned a series of concerts to be given in the new performance hall. He hoped to fill the program with a number of commissioned works from composers from both within and outside of the university. As the founder of the University Chorus twenty years before, Boyden suggested that Thompson write a choral work specifically for that ensemble. The outline of the festival and the conditions of the commission are described in a letter from Boyden to Thompson dated February 23, 1957. The concerts were to take place in April and May of 1958, so the time for Thompson to write a major work was brief (approximately one year), but Boyden gave no stipulations on the length, accompaniment, or the general nature of the work to be composed. He offered both the orchestra “now flourishing under a new Italian conductor” and organ “with a virtuoso to

⁷¹ The process of building new music facilities was fresh in Randall Thompson’s mind. As director of the music department at Harvard (1952-57), one of his major accomplishments was building the new Eda Kuhn Loeb Music Library. The primary fundraising effort had happened during 1953 and 1954, and ground was broken in the spring of 1955. Constructing an entire new music building had been an option, but instead the library was built as an addition to the existing building. Denny wrote to Thompson about their own building project in California, and said that he would stop talking about it since he knew it “fill[ed] you with envy.” William Denny to Randall Thompson, December 8, 1954, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 6: Folder “D 1939-1966”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

play it” as possible accompaniments.⁷² Boyden wrote again the next day to say that he failed to “mention anything about the length or scope” of the work, but preferred that Thompson suggest those details himself.⁷³

Thompson responded enthusiastically on March 19, 1957, and gave the first hints at the piece that would result. “I shall need a little time to select the perfect text and the combination that I write for will depend upon the nature of the words. My inclination is to write for the Chorus unaccompanied, but we shall see.”⁷⁴ In a series of four more letters between Thompson and Boyden during April and May, the decision for an a cappella work was still unclear. Thompson did indicate that a cappella was potentially less expensive when he estimated for Boyden the cost of extracting parts from an orchestral score (about \$1500). This process was fresh in his mind after recently doing the same for *Ode to the Virginia Voyage*. He compared this to the recent costs of duplication for his unaccompanied *Mass of the Holy Spirit* written the previous year (about \$200). If the unaccompanied *Requiem* that he had planned two years before was already firmly in his mind, Thompson did not show himself clearly advocating for a cappella in this correspondence. Rather, he continued to ask for text ideas from Boyden so that he could serve the purpose of their commission precisely. He spoke frankly about the costs involved between works with and without accompaniment:

If the work were a-cappella, this problem would not arise. Perhaps the best solution would be for me to write for chorus alone, especially in view of my

⁷² David Boyden to Randall Thompson, February 23, 1957, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 28: Folder “University of California”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁷³ Boyden to Thompson, February 23, 1957, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 28: Folder “University of California”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁷⁴ Thompson to Boyden, March 19, 1957, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 28: Folder “University of California”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

feeling for the Chorus at the University. Something of the nature and length of 'The Peaceable Kingdom' would certainly entail fewer problems all around.⁷⁵

At the close of the letter, though, he left all options open, saying "The primary consideration, however, seems to me to be the text; if it calls for orchestral accompaniment I should want to write one...."⁷⁶

If Thompson was hoping for an endorsement of a cappella, he received it in Boyden's next letter, "Naturally we want you to set a text in the way that seems best to you. All other things being equal, however, it would probably be best for us if you work were for a cappella chorus, for reasons of the distribution of our resources, and also for costs."⁷⁷ Perhaps excited at the step closer toward his *Requiem* idea, Thompson responded, "A cappella it shall be! In view of my warm feeling for the University of California Chorus, I shall be happy to concentrate on them to the exclusion of instruments."⁷⁸

Eager to settle the plans for the work, Thompson wrote another letter that day to Edward Lawton, who succeeded him as director of the University Chorus and would eventually conduct the *Requiem*. Still, Thompson showed himself to be a true servant to the commission and asked for guidance from the university to shape the work. Boyden

⁷⁵ Thompson to Boyden, May 14, 1957, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 28: Folder "University of California"), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁷⁶ Ibid. Yet another example of Thompson letting the text take prominence in the planning of the work. Even if he was thinking of the *Requiem*, he did not push Boyden in any specific direction.

⁷⁷ Boyden to Thompson, May 20, 1957, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 28: Folder "University of California"), Houghton Library, Harvard University. Boyden had mentioned in his original letter that they had been granted sizable monetary resources for the production of the festival, but he may certainly have balked at the \$1500 estimate for orchestral parts, since Thompson's commission alone was only \$1000.

⁷⁸ Thompson to Boyden, May 23, 1957, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 28: Folder "University of California"), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

had repeatedly given him absolute control over the nature of the work, but he gave

Lawton an opportunity for suggestion as well:

Dear Ed:

I have just written to David concluding the final arrangements for my writing a choral work for the Festival next spring. I am delighted that a work for unaccompanied chorus seems clearly indicated. For my part, it will be like writing a personal letter to an old friend!

I fly to Gstaad on July 3rd and want to go right to work on the piece. The only question in my mind is the text. I keep a little anthology for future use, but it would help me to know what your preference might be. Would you prefer something sacred or something secular? Would the material of the rest of the program indicate one kind of work or another, or is it too far ahead to tell? What size would the Chorus presumably be?

My thought is to write something of approximately the length of 'The P.K.', though something which would fill half a program is not out of the range of possibility, unless you way so.

I do not mean to burden you with these questions. As you probably remember, I would rather have even a few specifications to none at all. Any ideas would be welcome.

With all the best to you and Helena,

Randall Thompson⁷⁹

It is clear that Thompson was excited to be writing a cappella, planned to begin working immediately on a work similar in scope to *The Peaceable Kingdom*. With only seven months to complete the work, any length beyond that may have been daunting, and with the *Requiem* in mind, this earlier piece in the same vein would have been a good model.

In his lengthy response, Lawton both answered Thompson's question of text and described the chorus in detail. On the matter of text, his reply again offered freedom, albeit in a witty Cold-War-era way, "Short of an 'Ode to the Hydrogen Bomb' or an

⁷⁹ Randall Thompson to Edward Lawton, May 23, 1957, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 28: Folder "University of California"), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

‘Apostrophe to Osymandias,’ you have very free choice. As the probable works shape up, the balance is fairly well adjusted between sacred and secular.”⁸⁰ Lawton must have been excited to report the condition of the chorus, with a membership between 200 and 250. He had written Thompson in 1944, telling him that after he left the chorus dropped to a mere twenty-five, and was “now between 35 and 40.”⁸¹ For Thompson’s planning purposes, Lawton described the characteristics of each section of his choir. He reported the tenor section to be the weakest, saying they comprised only about ten percent of the chorus and that it is “risky to divide above mf” and that “the one thing I can rarely get is that celestial, floating tenor sound. Too much hog-calling on the ranches during adolescence, I guess.” The other sections were fairly strong, with “full” sopranos, “reedy” altos, and “sturdy” basses.⁸²

Another of Lawton’s descriptions of the chorus may have pushed Thompson closer to a *Requiem* of such significant length, contrasting their attitudes with that of the extra-curricular ensembles:

Moreover, the Chorus likes pieces of a substantial length. The students seem to prefer working on a whole Mass, say, to working on half a dozen miscellaneous short pieces. (This is one of the chief differences nowadays between the repertory of the Chorus and that of the Glee Club and Treble Clef.) Their response in rehearsals indicates clearly that they prefer getting deeply into a few styles to shopping around among many.

Hence anything from the length of the P.K. up to a full half-program is highly desirable. Particularly the latter! It looks now as if yours will be the only unaccompanied piece, and that fact, too, suggests a neat half-program for mechanical reasons—stage-furnishing and the like.⁸³

⁸⁰ Edward Lawton to Randall Thompson, June 5, 1957, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 28: Folder “University of California”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁸¹ Lawton to Thompson, April 8, 1944, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 9: Folder “Lawton, Edward”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁸² Edward Lawton to Randall Thompson, June 5, 1957.

⁸³ Ibid.

In the end, the *Requiem* would fill the full half-program that Lawton suggested. There is no evidence of any more correspondence between Thompson and Boyden or Lawton until November, when Lawton wrote to Thompson asking for even basic details about the piece that he was to begin rehearsing in January. His questions indicate that Thompson had at that point offered no details whatsoever.⁸⁴

The Composition and Thompson's Approach to the Setting

Assembling the Text

At the end of Randall Thompson's five-year term as chairman of the music department at Harvard, he took a year-long sabbatical beginning in the fall of 1957. The *Requiem* would eventually be over an hour of music, over three times the size of *The Peaceable Kingdom*, so substantial composition time was required. A clear concept for a work, a commission of great flexibility, and time for the work to happen had all come together.

Thompson had written in his May 23, 1957 letters to Boyden and Lawton that he planned to begin work on the piece immediately after flying to Gstaad on July 3, but in his "Notes on a *Requiem*," Thompson said that the *Requiem* was actually written at his home in Cambridge beginning November 20, 1957.⁸⁵ This was the date when notes were

⁸⁴ Edward Lawton to Randall Thompson, November 4, 1957, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 28: Folder "University of California"), Houghton Library, Harvard University. Lawton asked about "The Work," specifically "What is the medium – chorus with or without accompaniment? If with, what? What is the general nature of the text? What is the approximate length? Is it indicated for any particular place on a program? Would it be a suitable concluding work for the whole Festival?"

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

first recorded on paper, but Thompson had begun assembling the full text of his dramatic dialogue six weeks earlier, in early October.⁸⁶

For the *Requiem* texts, Thompson looked no further than the Bible, which was his preferred source for sacred texts. Thompson had experience choosing Biblical texts: when he collected the texts for *The Peaceable Kingdom*, he had begun by reading the entire book of Isaiah and copying out the passages that “appealed especially.”⁸⁷ Elliot Forbes said of *The Peaceable Kingdom* text assembly that “the care with which he pruned his own selection to arrive at what he has already described as a sequence based on the unfolding of a dramatic narrative is reminiscent of Brahms and his preparation of verses for his *German Requiem*.”⁸⁸

Thompson’s preference for scripture and his process of text assembly in the *Requiem* is consistent with *The Peaceable Kingdom*, but was carried out on a much larger scale. He described the process in detail:

In one Book or another, the Bible says everything that one could wish to say in a sacred text and says it in the most beautiful way. With the aid of a biblical concordance, I was able to track down an abundance of passages relevant to the dramatic situations in the synopsis by looking under key words such as *mourn, cease, consumed, sing, joy, praise, return*. As it was discovered, each passage was written out on a small card: green cards for one chorus, white cards for the other. To avoid undue length, only the finest and most pertinent passages were retained. These were arranged in logical sequence to form the dialogue.⁸⁹

With the selection of texts complete, the five dramatic parts of the drama had been filled with the dialogue for the characters. In all, there were sixty-four verses drawn

⁸⁶ Ibid., 33.

⁸⁷ Forbes, “Americana,” 72.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 72-73.

⁸⁹ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 33-34.

from seventeen books of the Bible.⁹⁰ How the texts functioned in the drama was already in Thompson's mind as he assembled the text—based on the drama, some movements would be sung by only one character (the “souls of the faithful” or the “chorus of mourners”), some had texts that alternated between the characters, and some texts were shared by the two characters.

Composing the Music

Selection of texts took six weeks, and then Thompson began setting the text to music on November 20. When Lawton's letter arrived on November 4 asking about the progress and general features of the work, Thompson was only halfway through the organization of the text and could not have been very specific in answering the questions. The January 10, 1958 deadline for the score would prove impossible to meet. Because Thompson habitually indicated dates of composition or completion at the ends of his manuscript scores, his progress can be established precisely (a completion schedule is collected in Appendix A).

Thompson had decided on some significant musical features before he even assembled the text, most notably the choice of ensemble. The double-chorus medium was required for many reasons, and offered a number of advantages, which Thompson outlined in “Notes on a *Requiem*.”⁹¹ Just as he had told Boyden and Lawton originally that he would write an orchestral accompaniment if the chosen text called for it, many basic features of the *Requiem* text dictated the medium.

Regarding the *Requiem*, therefore, the choice of double chorus was indicated by the dialogue form of the text but also by its length. This is an example of the

⁹⁰ This total includes one passage from the apocryphal book Wisdom of Solomon, a book Brahms had also used in his *Ein deutsches Requiem*.

⁹¹ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 34. Section titled “Double Chorus and Choral Sequence.”

influence of text and subject matter on the choice of medium. The text could, supposedly, have been set for four-part chorus, but it is doubtful that any such chorus could have weathered a performance of it.⁹²

This medium requirement made by the text gave Thompson several other compositional tools, which he identified.⁹³ First, the double chorus allows the composer to voice chords in extreme ranges without sacrificing dense texture. Secondly, by alternating choirs, the double chorus can also offer a “constant flow of sound,” eliminating breath pauses to make even chordal passages “as legato as the organ.”⁹⁴ This technique is magnified in Part I and Part IV, subdividing Choir II into two mixed choirs to give constant motion to their music alone. A third advantage is the “almost inexhaustible variety of color combinations” created by adjusting the voicing of passages to suit the color needed. In the *Requiem*, Thompson used several combinations, including women’s and men’s voices only, six-part mixed chorus, unison voices, and various pairings of voice parts. The fourth tool Thompson recognized is the ability to occasionally join parts at the unison or octave to allow certain lines to predominate. This can be done by temporarily eliminating *divisi* (combining Tenor I and II, for example) or joining other adjacent parts in unison (such as Alto II and Tenor I).⁹⁵ Use of these and other compositional devices related to double chorus are traced through the *Requiem* in the analysis portion of this document (Chapters 3-7).

In addition to Thompson’s list of ways he approached the use of double chorus, he also provided some comments on other “technical considerations” that he kept in mind

⁹² Ibid., 35.

⁹³ Ibid., 35-36.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 34.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 35.

while composing the work.⁹⁶ The first was the desire for equality between the two choruses in both difficulty level and amount of music. Thompson distributed solo (single choir) movements and fugues accordingly. In general vocal range, Choir I was given music with a slightly higher *tessitura*.⁹⁷

The second major consideration was giving the *Requiem* unity. Thompson said that a certain degree of unity is gained by text alone, but could be reinforced musically by means of a tonal scheme. In the case of the *Requiem*, he laid out no specific key scheme, knowing only that the first and last tonal centers would be E. The key areas in between were dictated by the mood of the text and context of the surrounding movements.

The problem in constructing a long work is not so much the planning of a logical succession of keys as it is the reconciliation of such a succession to the exigencies of music and text encountered along the way. A good key scheme may call for A major at a certain point: the text cries out for B-flat minor! In writing the *Requiem*, no preliminary tonal course was plotted.⁹⁸

Another common way of achieving musical unity is through motives, but Thompson indicated that “No unifying motive or motto was used to bind the work together. Thematically, its unity is chiefly the unity of contrast.”⁹⁹ There are in fact several recurring motives that are identified in the analysis portion of this document. Thompson was correct, though, in saying they did not permeate the musical texture. In every case, it is the text that dictated the shape of the music, thus the contrasts in the text between the two choruses prescribed the resulting contrast in the music.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 36.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 36. Thompson wrote six movements for Choir I and four for Choir II, but Choir II has a much larger part in the first and last movements. Each choir also sings one fugue alone, and another together.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 37.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 37.

Thompson's third and fourth "technical considerations" are related to Thompson's sustaining interest in an extended work through means of variety, first in the form of individual movements and second in the changes of tempo. Need for formal variety in an extended a cappella work is self-evident:

A long series of through-composed choruses would tend to lack shape: continuous use of any one kind of formal design—binary, ternary, rondo, or even fugue—would be monotonous. In writing the *Requiem*, no preconceived order of forms was laid down, but the value of formal contrast was kept in mind.¹⁰⁰

If any one form predominated, the composition would suffer, but it was clear that Thompson did not set out with a checklist of forms to use. Instead, he allowed himself to be guided by the nature of each portion of text as he composed, keeping the importance of variety present but in the background. For instance, the three fugues in the work have differing dramatic purposes, and thus are built with a distinct set of fugal techniques.¹⁰¹ With respect to tempo variety, Thompson generally alternated fast and slow, but underlying variety was in mind early on: "The desirability of such tempo contrasts was considered from the start, in preparing the text."¹⁰² He admitted that a series of movements with successively slower tempos (as in most of Part V) was "rare, even dangerous," but the needs of the drama overrode that principle.

It is clear that Thompson approached the *Requiem* with substantial forethought and with the eye of a craftsman. His many considerations came from principles of excellent compositional practice, though he did not allow external structures the power to dictate the details of the composition. Rather, in every instance, he allowed the text to

¹⁰⁰ Thompson, "Notes on a *Requiem*," 38.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 38.

¹⁰² Ibid., 39.

guide the musical setting in matters of medium, tonality, form, and tempo. What Elliot Forbes said about *The Peaceable Kingdom* could be easily applied to the *Requiem* as well: “The composer spent a long time selecting his text from a large number of possible verses from Isaiah. The effect of the work is due in no small measure to the skill in this selection.”¹⁰³ Thompson widened the text palette for the *Requiem* to include the entire Bible.

The Premiere Performance

In his question-filled letter of November 4, 1957, Edward Lawton told Thompson that he had “arranged the rehearsals for this year to allow almost the whole Spring term for rehearsal,” and added, “Don’t be bashful, though, about sending me any [music] at any time you are ready.”¹⁰⁴ However, there is no evidence that Randall Thompson sent completed portions of the work in advance of the entire score, so the preparation time for the premiere performance by the University Chorus was far shorter than originally planned. The final notes were added to the score on March 21, 1958, and the work still needed to be reproduced and sent to California. Since the two performances were scheduled for May 22 and 23, Lawton faced the daunting task of preparing the entire seventy-minute a cappella work in at most seven weeks. The rehearsal time proved to be inadequate, and the choir sung with piano accompaniment and a large portion of Part IV was omitted. Consequently, the audience of the premiere performance received an under-rehearsed, incomplete rendition of the *Requiem*.

Lawton had also asked if “The Work” would be a “suitable concluding work for the whole Festival.” When it was finally scheduled, the *Requiem* was to be part of the

¹⁰³ Forbes, “The Music of Randall Thompson,” 15.

¹⁰⁴ Lawton to Thompson, November 4, 1957.

final concert of the series, and the last of the commissioned works to be performed. In addition to attending the Thursday evening premiere performance, Thompson was invited to give a lecture Wednesday evening on a topic of his choosing. Thompson was already in California by the nineteenth, when Nancy and Ted Pratt sent him a letter thanking him for the copy of the *Requiem* that he had given them.¹⁰⁵

Several reviews of the premiere performance show enthusiasm. Arthur Bloomfield wrote in the *California Bulletin* that it was “one of the choral masterpieces of the century” alongside *King David* and *Symphony of Psalms*.¹⁰⁶ Alfred Frankenstein, long-time critic for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, provided such a positive review that it was excerpted and used for publicity by E. C. Schirmer after the work had been published. He could hardly use enough adjectives to describe his excitement.

This is one of Thompson’s largest choral compositions, one of his most inventive and philosophical, and one in which his genius for choral writing reaches something of a climax.... This is a big, ambitious theme, and it is altogether unique in its musical realization. The *Requiem* is actually a kind of choral symphony in five movements, enclosing a world of feelings as every proper symphony should. It provides the opportunity for strict forms and free forms, for modal picturesqueness and long lines of sustained, radiant song.... Above all, the work is remarkable for its fineness of its vocal texture. Thompson always makes you think there is nothing as beautiful, as rich, or as varied as the sounds of the human voice. Here, however, he sets himself the unique task of revealing the gradual ennoblement of the voice through a parallel, mounting structure of musical text. And he brings it off!¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Nancy and Ted Pratt to Randall Thompson c/o Edward Lawton, May 19, 1958, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 11: Folder “Mass of the Holy Spirit”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹⁰⁶ Arthur Bloomfield, “Between Earthly, Heavenly Choir,” *California Bulletin*, May 26, 1958.

¹⁰⁷ Alfred Frankenstein, “Randall Thompson Work Premiered.” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 24, 1958. Frankenstein had positively reviewed previous works of Thompson’s, including *Americana* in 1935.

At the end of the review, Frankenstein noted the uniqueness and significance he saw in the *Requiem* text. As for the future, he expected the *Requiem* to “have a considerable number of performances in the coming years.”

Clearly, the performance had an effect on the listeners, but there were other reviews that, though positive overall, illuminated some difficult aspects of the performance.¹⁰⁸ Reviewing the entire festival for *The Musical Quarterly*, Alan Rich wrote of the *Requiem*,

To offer a work of these proportions to a university chorus is to flirt with danger, and it is likely that a supporting piano will be needed frequently and importantly, as it was in Berkeley, whenever the piece is sung. Within its conservative framework the work has many moments of simple and poignant beauty, and the composer’s command of choral color is well enough known not to require mention here. It cannot, however, be proclaimed a composition completely devoid of tedium.¹⁰⁹

Rich’s comment about moments of “tedium” was echoed by William Glackin in his review for *The Sacramento Bee*, who felt that the work had “not enough change of pace.” However, Glackin and other reviewers did mention the omission of most of Part IV, which eliminated fifteen lines of text.¹¹⁰ If the omitted portions were the most complex of “The Garment of Praise,” the result would be six or seven consecutive movements of relatively static or increasingly slower tempos. In that case, the charge of “tedium” would be entirely understandable.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Lawton to Thompson, June 5, 1957. In his first letter to Thompson, Lawton had mentioned, “If it turns out that way, we could consider stabilizing the pitch with a small stage Positiv that would be presumably inaudible to all but the singers.”

¹⁰⁹ Alan Rich, “Current Chronicle,” *The Musical Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (July 1958): 370.

¹¹⁰ William Glackin, “A Happy Song of Death,” *The Sacramento Bee*, May 31, 1958. Clifford Gessler, “Thompson Requiem Closes U. C. Morrison Music Festival,” *Oakland Tribune*, May 23, 1958.

¹¹¹ Part IV has two slow outer movements with similar music. The interior movements feature frequent and sudden alternations between textures as well as some of the most brisk tempos. Additionally, Part IV does

In summary, reviews of the premiere show a work that generated significant enthusiasm, as even the more critical reviews recognized some excellence in the piece. With a hurried preparation of an incomplete, accompanied performance, the limited amount of negative feedback is surprising. The positive comments in the reviews can be viewed as an accomplishment of the University Chorus and its conductor, and a testament to the quality of the work itself.

The First Complete Performance

The year that Thompson was on sabbatical, and writing the *Requiem*, the Harvard music department reassessed its relationship with the various student clubs, which were in essence the university's performing ensembles. When G. Wallace Woodworth (Woody) retired from directing the Harvard Glee Club after twenty-five years, the department took the opportunity to replace him with a new faculty member who would conduct student club choirs as part of his teaching load.

Elliot Forbes, a Harvard alumnus, came from teaching at Princeton to fill this new position and take over the Harvard Glee Club (HGC) and Radcliffe Choral Society (RCS) in the fall of 1958. There is no record of when the decision was made for the two groups to perform the *Requiem*, but Thompson would have been understandably eager to see the work get a full performance with adequate rehearsal time. The preparation spanned the entire 1958-1959 school year, and included partial performances: the RCS and the Amherst Glee Club presented Part IV ("The Garment of Praise") on February 8, 1959; and the HGC and RCS took "The Garment of Praise" to New York City for two

little textually to advance the drama. Skipping the interior movements would not harm the story line and eliminate some of the most difficult music, so this would be the most reasonable section to omit due to lack of rehearsal time.

performances on February 22. Because Part IV of the *Requiem* was truncated in the California premiere, these were its first full performances.

The *Requiem*'s first complete performance took place on April 24, 1959, three days after Randall Thompson's sixtieth birthday. There was enough enthusiasm and anticipation for the potential of this first full performance that it was recorded for commercial distribution.¹¹² A fine recording would have certainly helped the *Requiem* be more marketable for publication. The combined HGC and RCS was similar in size to the University Chorus in California, about 250. Though already under copyright by E. C. Schirmer, the work had not yet been formally published, so the choir sang from the same photolithograph manuscript editions as those used the previous May. The Harvard concert began with J. S. Bach's motet *Singet dem Herrn*, resulting in an entire concert of double choir a cappella music.

Randall and Margaret Thompson hosted a reception at their house following the event, which was attended by the members of the music faculty, officers of the music clubs, local conductors, and members of the E. C. Schirmer Music Company. The sentiments of both Elliot Forbes and Randall Thompson are recorded in letters they exchanged after the concert:

Dear Randall,

April 27, 1959

I'm so sorry that I missed your phone call last night; I was in Framingham with the Glee Club.

This is a note of thanks, appreciation and affection, the opportunity that you gave me to have a truly memorable prolonged artistic experience results from three factors: your having been inspired to write the *Requiem*, your asking me to come to Harvard which enabled me to have the thrill of giving the work its first hearing here, and third, and this is what I want to emphasize, your wonderful

¹¹² Randall Thompson, *Requiem*, Harvard Glee Club and Radcliffe Choral Society, dir. Elliot Forbes, Technicord T15-16, 1959.

advice, patience and understanding at all stages of the preparation – this is what made the experience so enjoyable as well as rewarding.

Then to top it off you and Margaret gave that lovely party. The fact that we stayed ‘till 3.15 is perhaps the best evidence as to how we felt about that!

Many, many, thanks for all these things, Randall. The singers are all rejoicing as much as myself.

Faithfully, El¹¹³

Forbes did not offer specific opinions on how he felt the performance went, but he did give evidence that the preparation was a long process and that Thompson was involved as well. In Thompson’s response two weeks later, he gave a more candid appraisal of the results, and hinted as to the advice he had given during the preparation.

Dear Elliot,

May 8, ‘59

The thanks are all from me to you. Agreed, it was a happy convergence of our favorable stars that brought you to Harvard and, in the same year, found me ready with a new work for you to conduct.

I wonder whether you truly realize what a very good thing it was, for me, to get you both as a colleague and as a conductor as one at the same time? So often one writes a work only to hear it performed in a lifeless, perfunctory way. But the performance of the Requiem caught fire! A whole year of painstaking and loving preparation had gone into it. There is no denying that it is a long and difficult work, tho I tried not to make it so. It is not so difficult, notewise, as many shorter works. Emotionally, however, it is extremely taxing, owing to the overwhelming beauty and intensity of the Biblical text.

And yet how beautifully, how strongly, how sensitively and how responsively, the whole concert was sung! Over and above the diction, the dynamic range, the sweetness and the strength, the performance had one outstanding quality which is indispensable to good choral singing: it was always rhythmic. I don’t mean only the rhythm of ‘bar to bar’ but also the rhythm of the phrase, of the accelerando and the retard – in the larger sense, the timing of the whole work. All the singers realized this, consciously or unconsciously, I am sure.

Of course, poor singing begets nothing at all. Beautiful singing begets more beautiful singing. That’s the beauty of it. This is what Fred Pratt told me before he died. I tried to have the Requiem embody the essence of this idea. Fred had gotten so much out of music that he wanted to put something back into it! Listening the other night, I thought to myself, ‘He did.’

The next time you see the Harvard Glee Club and the R. Ch. Soc., please try to let them know how humbly grateful and admiring I feel for what they did,

¹¹³ Elliot Forbes to Randall Thompson, April 24, 1959, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70 Box 7: Folder “Forbes, Elliot”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

and were, the other night. The truly wonderful thing about it was that, under your hands, they sang with the Spirit and they sang w. the understanding also.

Yours ever,

R¹¹⁴

A review of the performance indicates that the performance was not without its difficulties. The reviewer from the *Harvard Crimson* was more impressed with structural sophistication than with the drama, and thus thought the opening movement to be the greatest achievement of the work.¹¹⁵ The prominence of the text was to him a detraction, particularly the declamatory passages. Besides his thoughts on the quality of the work, he was correct in noticing two deficiencies in the execution, which are confirmed by the recording. The first was the dropping of pitch over the course of the Part II, “The Triumph of Faith,” which resulted in the final movement of that section being sung a full minor third lower than written pitch. From both dramatic and practical standpoints, re-pitching the choir is impossible except between full sections, so flatting has the potential to compound itself into unusual proportions as it did in the first full performance.¹¹⁶ The second deficiency was an occasional timidity from the soprano sections.¹¹⁷

Publication History following the Premiere

The *Requiem*’s early publication history is complicated by the fact that there were two scores: a facsimile of the manuscript and the formally engraved version. Like all of

¹¹⁴ Randall Thompson to Elliot Forbes, May 8, 1959, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70 Box 7: Folder “Forbes, Elliot”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹¹⁵ Part I is a large single movement with a brief text that is repeated throughout. Consequently, its musical structure takes precedence over text delivery.

¹¹⁶ Technically, this performance was not full either. Short cuts of repeated material in the middle of Part IV were made for recording purposes due to the time limitations of sides of an LP disc.

¹¹⁷ Paul Bittenwieser, “Thompson Requiem at Sanders Theater,” *The Harvard Crimson*, April 27, 1959.

Thompson's choral works, the *Requiem* was published by E. C. Schirmer. The copyright on the engraved score is 1960, but letters between Randall Thompson and E. C. Schirmer show that the this score was not actually released until sometime in the spring of 1963. Following the publication of the entire score, certain excerpts were published separately.¹¹⁸ One reason for the delay may have been that E. C. Schirmer had printed about a thousand copies of the manuscript score, and it made little sense to print the engraved score until they had exhausted that supply.¹¹⁹

Thompson had made several small revisions between the manuscript and engraved scores. A corrected manuscript score in the Randall Thompson collection at the Houghton Library contains many handwritten corrections, nearly all of which are included in the engraved score.¹²⁰ Most of the changes are adjustments to the voicing of eight-part chords, text underlay, and expressive instructions. The most musically-significant changes are tempo indications, and some of them are radical changes.¹²¹ An analysis of the recording shows that several of the tempos that were revised are reflected in the recording.¹²² Other obvious changes to rhythm and text underlay were also revised

¹¹⁸ Since 1963, E. C. Schirmer has published the same extracted sections: *Good Tidings to the Meek*, from Part II; Part IV ("The Garment of Praise") in its entirety; and *Ye were sometimes darkness, The Lord Shall be unto thee, Thou hast given him, and Amen and amen, alleluia*, all from Part V.

¹¹⁹ Royalty Statements for Randall Thompson, 1957-1983, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 34) Houghton Library, Harvard University. Printing estimates based on Randall Thompson's commission statements from 1958-1963.

¹²⁰ Randall Thompson, *Requiem: A Dramatic Dialogue for Unaccompanied Chorus*, (Boston: E. C. Schirmer Music Company, 1958). Thompson's personal copy in the Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers, (*85-M70, Box 48), Houghton Library, Harvard University. Hereafter referenced as "Thompson, *Requiem*, corrected manuscript score."

¹²¹ See Appendix B. A table outlines the changes in metronome markings between the manuscript and published versions of the score, and also gives the performance tempo of the 1959 performance (in which the singers used manuscript copies).

¹²² For example: *Sing unto Him* (revised from quarter-note = 100 down to 92) and the most drastic tempo change in *Amen and amen, alleluia* (revised from half-note = 80 to quarter-note = 96, performed quarter-note = 100).

in the recording.¹²³ Taken together, the revisions show that Thompson moderated some of the fastest and slowest tempos.

None of the revisions can be considered major, but the fact that many of them appear in the 1959 recording indicates that Thompson made the revisions either after the California premiere or during the process of preparing the work at Harvard. The manuscript copies that were sold prior to 1963, then, were only slightly different from the final version.

The Engraved Score

From a publisher's perspective, the *Requiem* presented several problems. The work is quite long for a choral piece, and in the majority of movements there are eight independent voice parts. The differences between the formatting of the manuscript score and the engraved score greatly affected the both the size and retail price of the published score. The cost of vocal scores alone would prove to be a major obstacle to choirs hoping to perform this new *Requiem*.

The manuscript score was written on 16-stave paper, which worked quite well for a double chorus work. When all eight voices had independent parts, as they do in the majority of the piece, each page neatly held two systems of music. In movements where only four voices are sounding, such as when choirs have movements alone (i.e. *Good tidings to the meek* from Part II) or when they trade phrases without overlap (i.e. most of Part II), then as many as four systems of music would fit on a single page. The resulting

¹²³ For example: Thompson removed a beat from measure 37 of Part II, movement 2 in the revised score, and the Harvard recording includes that revision.

score was 129 pages and sold for \$2.25.¹²⁴ The facsimiles were meant to be temporary; there was never doubt that the *Requiem* would precede to formal publication.¹²⁵

When E. C. Schirmer set to engraving the score, a few important formatting changes were made. As is customary with vocal scores, a piano reduction was added beneath the vocal parts. For a publisher, the reduction is a rehearsal convenience that is obligatory for most choral works in order to make them marketable, so the choice to add these extra staves was a wise one. The complication that arose was that the piano reduction increased each signature of music to a total of ten staves for a majority of the work. Consequently, most of the work is engraved with only one system per page (fig. 2.1). Furthermore, when only four voices were sounding, only two systems fit rather than the previous four (fig. 2.2). In all, the score increased from 129 to 243 pages in publication, and the paper used was increased from letter size (8.5 x 11 inches) to 9 x 12 inches.

One other addition was made to make the *Requiem* more feasible for choirs who may have struggled with the idea of performing such a long a cappella work. At the bottom of the first page in the engraved score there is a message that “An accompaniment for double string ensemble, duplicating the voice parts, is available on a rental basis from the publisher.”¹²⁶ Though this was offered, there is no evidence that the string parts were

¹²⁴ Robert MacWilliams to Randall Thompson, February 8, 1963, (*85-M70 Box 15: Folder “Schirmer Music Company”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹²⁵ Randall Thompson, *Requiem: A Dramatic Dialogue for Unaccompanied Chorus*, (Boston: E. C. Schirmer Music Company, 1958). The cover of the facsimile score reads, “This photolithographic print of the composer’s manuscript has been made available to accommodate any demand during the interim prior to formal publication.”

¹²⁶ Randall Thompson, *Requiem*, (Boston: E. C. Schirmer Music Company, 1960), 1.

[illegible]

musical score for "The Brook" by Robert Schumann, Op. 26, No. 1. The score is in G major and 4/4 time. It features a piano introduction, a vocal melody, and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "He hath sent me to bind up the brook - en - heart - en -". The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *mf*, and *f*, and articulation like slurs and accents. The piece concludes with a final chord.

Figure 2.2. Excerpt from a four-voice portion of the *Requiem: Good Tidings to the Meek* in 4 signatures (manuscript score, p. 43) and 2 signatures per page (engraved score, p. 72).

ever rented, or that they even were created.¹²⁷

Though the score was engraved in 1960, E. C. Schirmer did not begin printing and selling that score until 1963. There were some delays during the final stages in February of 1963, as the original cover was revised at Thompson's request. Throughout his career, Thompson had been known to invest time and energy in people he had known for even a short time, a trait that brought the *Requiem* to life in the first place with Fred Pratt. In December of 1962, Randall Thompson had been in Evanston, Illinois for a performance of *The Nativity According to Saint Luke*, and had been impressed by the lettering of work's title that had been used in the promotional materials. He sought out the local calligrapher James Hayes, and had E. C. Schirmer contract him to redesign the cover for the *Requiem*.¹²⁸ A single letter from E. C. Schirmer president Robert MacWilliams on February 8 illuminates several important points about the final publication stages:

I was glad to receive your letter of February 1st and to learn that you have decided against changing the title of your REQUIEM. Although there may be several valid criticisms to be made of the title, I agree that your reasons for maintaining it are sound. At this point in the work's history, we were but waiting for your word before proceeding, and have, according to your wishes, commissioned Mr. James Hayes to render a new cover. We have provided him with specifications and mechanical requirements of our printing plant and have given him carte blanche in questions of design. Between my last letter and your answer the Midwestern choral group advised that the cost of the REQUIEM will prohibit their performance. Thus we still have just short of 100 copies of the facsimile edition left. This is a good record! Dare we hope that the published copy, that must be marked considerably over the \$2.25 facsimile edition price, will sell as well?¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Robert Schuneman, interview with author, January 14, 2011.

¹²⁸ Robert MacWilliams to Randall Thompson, February 8, 1963, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70 Box 15: Folder "Schirmer Music Company"), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Beyond the confirmation that Thompson had James Hayes design a new cover, there are three important points that can be drawn from this letter. The first is that a change in the title was seriously considered. The fact that Thompson's *Requiem* bears no textual resemblance to a liturgical Requiem must have prompted that discussion. Secondly, there is a report that an unidentified choral group interested in performing the *Requiem* had decided against it due to the cost of scores. The third point is that E. C. Schirmer was cautiously optimistic about the future success of the *Requiem* based on how well the facsimile edition had sold. This optimism was tempered by the reality that the published copy would be priced significantly higher.

When the published copy was finally released, five years after the premiere, it sold for nearly three times the manuscript price: \$7.50. At that price, any performance would have required a serious financial commitment, particularly for a work that required large numbers of singers.

Performance History

For several reasons, the formal publication did not lead to the *Requiem* becoming the choral mainstay that some of the early critics had predicted. Rather than responding to its new availability by purchasing and performing the work, directors and choirs balked at the price of the score and its perceived difficulty. Thompson sent review copies to several choral directors that he knew. Many of the responses from directors do mention difficulty, but cost was the main inhibitor. William Ballard was choral director at both at Northwestern University and also a large church in Evanston, Illinois, and corresponded with Thompson several times a week for decades. He showed interest in producing the *Requiem*, but it was out of reach for his church: "In discussing other works of yours to

couple with the P.K., ‘The Mass of the Holy Spirit’ seems about the right length. We talked of the Requiem, but it is a bit long, and we probably couldn’t afford to buy it.”¹³⁰

In this case Ballard was speaking of the cost of the facsimile scores, leaving little doubt that the published score—at triple the expense—would not even have been considered.

The next full performance of the *Requiem* did take place at a church. Harold Schmidt had been a close colleague of Thompson’s and was director of the choir of First United Methodist Church, Palo Alto, California. They had purchased a set of facsimile scores and performed Parts IV and V in 1961.¹³¹ After Schmidt had left Palo Alto, a full performance took place on May 2, 1964, but again from the facsimile scores.¹³² In this case, the facsimile scores had satisfied the needs of some directors who had been part of the initial excitement over the *Requiem* premiere, and they did not purchase the engraved score when it became available.

An announcement in *The Diapason* about new choral publications was optimistic and suggested that collegiate ensembles would be most likely to perform the *Requiem*.

An engraved edition of his large-dimension Requiem, completed in 1958, is now available. Unaccompanied, the work sometimes requires three mixed choruses. Dr. Thompson’s skill in choral writing is too widely acclaimed to require any comment; surely this work will find many performances, especially in college situations.¹³³

¹³⁰ William Ballard to Randall Thompson, December 12, 1962, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 29: Folder “Evanston, Illinois”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹³¹ Harold Schmidt to Randall Thompson, June 5, 1958. Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 14: Folder “Schmidt, Harold”), Houghton Library, Harvard University. “As for the Requiem—I wait for the day to organize all of my choral singers. What a challenge.”

¹³² Eileen Washington to Randall Thompson, March 24, 1964. Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 17: Folder “W 1939-66”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹³³ “New Choral Music,” *The Diapason* 55, no. 5 (January 1964): 8.

This would prove to be true, at least in part. The extracted movements had also been published, the largest of which was “The Garment of Praise” (Part IV in its entirety). Fourteen college choirs gathered for the North Carolina Intercollegiate Choral Festival in April of 1964 and performed “The Garment of Praise” for one of their massed pieces. Perhaps the widest early exposure for the work was the following year when Westminster Choir College took “The Garment of Praise” on their tour in 1965.¹³⁴ The first full performance of the *Requiem* from the engraved scores was finally given in March of 1966 by the Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C.

Several letters confirm suspicions about the cost of the score inhibiting performance. Early in 1966 Michael Cordovana, director of the Catholic University choir, had written E. C. Schirmer to ask about acquiring fifty additional scores to add to the fifty they had already purchased. At one point the Catholic University asked if they could rent rather than buy the scores, and knowing that the scores were expensive, E. C. Schirmer had discussed that possibility at some point internally:

I told Mr. Cordovana that I would speak with you about it but have a hunch if we say nothing, they will purchase another fifty. You will recall we spoke once of having these Vocal Scores available on a rental basis. I don't believe we reached any decision.¹³⁵

In the end, fifty more scores were purchased, but the issue of rental had at least been discussed after over two years of the engraved *Requiem* having been in print.¹³⁶

Cordovana sent a recording of the performance to E. C. Schirmer, and mentioned that

¹³⁴ George Lynn to Randall Thompson, April 5, 1965, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70 Box 22: Folder “Scrapbook, 1965”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹³⁵ Robert MacWilliams to Randall Thompson, January 16, 1966, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70 Box 15: Folder “Schirmer Music Company”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹³⁶ Robert MacWilliams to Randall Thompson, March 3, 1966, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70 Box 15: Folder “Schirmer Music Company”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

though the performance suffered technically in terms of pitch, that “in all my years of conducting, I cannot recall a performance that became so personal to all of us.” He thought that Thompson had created “a truly great Choral Masterpiece.”¹³⁷

Many people had responded to the cost of the *Requiem* score by simply not purchasing it, evidenced by slow sales and lack of performances. One college choir director responded differently, and wrote in heated terms to E. C. Schirmer complaining about the cost and size of the published score. The story is isolated, but illustrates a feeling that many directors may have shared.

This is a vigorous protest.... Your publication of the parts of Randall Thompson’s REQUIEM. This is a worthy work of considerable interest, which we would like to use...but shall NOT, under any circumstances, simply because of the ridiculous format and outlandish pricing in which you have issued it.

...this instance of the REQUIEM is so far out of proportion that it will only increase the incidence of illegal music copying....in spite of proposed stiffening of copyright laws, which action for the most part seems ill-considered and futile. You may simply count on it that a group that wants to perform the REQUIEM, whose budget will not stand the fantastic prices you have set (such groups are legion) will find lots of ways to duplicate the single copy they will purchase.¹³⁸

Thompson responded by defending E. C. Schirmer and their decisions.

The carbon copy of your letter of August 4th to the President of the E.C. Schirmer Music Company is at hand. I am confident that he will give it the attention it deserves. For my own part, I only want to tell you that your allegations of “eccentrics,” “gall,” “stupidity” and “snobbish disdain” have no basis in fact whatsoever.¹³⁹

Sales of the *Requiem* score remained slow for the rest of the 1960s, and there are records of no more full performances. Fewer than a thousand copies were sold between

¹³⁷ Michael Cordovana to Robert MacWilliams, June 10, 1966. Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70 Box 23: Folder “Scrapbook 1966”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹³⁸ Royal Stanton to Robert MacWilliams, April 4, 1965. Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70 Box 14: Folder “S, 1966-”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹³⁹ Randall Thompson to Royal Stanton, April 10, 1965, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70 Box 14: Folder “S, 1966-”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

1963 and 1970, with none sold at all from July 1969 to December 1970. For comparison, over this same period, *Alleluia* was selling between thirty and forty thousand copies annually. The extracted movements sold better, but still at levels far below many of Thompson's other small works.¹⁴⁰

E. C. Schirmer did attempt other approaches to increase sales of the *Requiem*, but those had to wait until it was time to reprint. With slow sales, it took ten years for that to be necessary. Because the extracted movements were written in at most eight parts, they were easily reduced to octavo size, making them both less expensive to print and more manageable for choirs and folders. That process was more difficult for the entire *Requiem* with its more heavily-divided movements, but E. C. Schirmer did attempt a reduction. A letter from E. C. Schirmer to Thompson in 1973:

Requiem should be reprinted soon, and before doing so I wish to be certain that we have received from you a complete list of errors and omissions. Also, I would like to suggest photographically reducing the work to our usual royal octavo size. We are assured by the printer that this could be accomplished without compromising legibility. Please give me your reaction.¹⁴¹

Thompson's response to this was positive, and shows that he had been initially apprehensive about the size of the first printing.

I am of course relieved that you are bringing out the octavo edition of Requiem, as urged by me from the very beginning. If you will return to me the corrigenda already sent to you, I will complete the list from my own copies of the original quarts edition and of the octavo excerpts and return the full list to you.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Royalty Statements for Randall Thompson, 1957-1983, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 34) Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹⁴¹ Robert MacWilliams to Randall Thompson, March 26 1973, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70 Box 15: Folder "Schirmer Music Company"), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹⁴² Randall Thompson to Robert MacWilliams, April 1973, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (85-M70 Box 15: Folder "Schirmer Music Company"), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Sadly, after printing a short trial run of octavo-size *Requiem* scores, that effort was abandoned due to sections of the score becoming illegible.¹⁴³

The next full performance on record is also the only performance with Randall Thompson conducting. He had conducted “The Garment of Praise” in North Carolina (for the Intercollegiate Choral Festival of 1964) but had conducted none of the previous four *Requiem* performances. The performance was given by Trinity Episcopal Church in Boston on November 2, 1972. The score from which Thompson conducted is in the Houghton Library, but markings offer minimal interpretive clues.¹⁴⁴ The concert was recorded, but the recording has since been lost.¹⁴⁵ Sales of the *Requiem* continued to be slow during the 1970s, often not reaching a hundred copies a year. When the supply of printed copies was exhausted, the full *Requiem* score fell out of print, existing only in the extracted movements. Recently, E. C. Schirmer digitized the printed score and reduced it to a standard 8.5-x-11-inch size, allowing the full *Requiem* to return to a print on-demand status. The issues of cost still linger, with the retail price of the current score set at \$44.00.¹⁴⁶

The last complete performance on record was given the year after Randall Thompson died, by the Fairfax Choral Society in Fairfax, Virginia. They gave two performances, March 23 and 24, 1985, and referred to the *Requiem* as “seldom performed” in their advertisements (*The Washington Post*, March 17, 1985, p. H6).

¹⁴³ Robert Schuneman, interview with author, Boston, MA, January 14, 2011.

¹⁴⁴ Randall Thompson, *Requiem*, (Boston: E. C. Schirmer, 1963), in Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 48), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹⁴⁵ Richard Webster, email to author, January 11, 2011.

¹⁴⁶ Robert Schuneman, interview.

Though there have been no documented full performances since 1985, the largest extracted movements have received some attention. *Ye were sometimes darkness* has sold several thousand copies and was recorded in concert by the St. Olaf Choir in 1991.¹⁴⁷ “The Garment of Praise” (Part IV) was recorded by the New Amsterdam Singers in 2002.¹⁴⁸

Philosophical Background

What did writing the *Requiem* mean to Randall Thompson, or writing any piece that dealt with death? Some of his speeches and writings offer clues, and indicate that the *Requiem* can be seen as Thompson’s personal statement on the subject of life and death.

In 1974, Randall Thompson was asked to contribute to a special volume of the *American Choral Review* that was being prepared to celebrate his seventy-fifth birthday. While other works of his were more popular and had a wider audience, he chose to write an essay about the *Requiem*, an essay that is referenced throughout this document. At the time, he had seen this work performed only five times in fifteen years. It had quickly become overshadowed by *Frostiana*, and had never even approached the exposure of *The Peaceable Kingdom* or even *The Nativity According to Saint Luke*. Yet he chose to write on this neglected work, and did so in a personal way. Rather than dealing only with the compositional elements of the piece, he also chose to address at length the personal story and inspiration behind the work.

In the spring of 1946, Randall Thompson had delivered a message at Princeton University titled “Music, a Mirror,” which reveals some of Thompson’s thoughts about music in general and how compositions relate to their creators. In order to be seen in its

¹⁴⁷ Randall Thompson, “Walk as Children of Light,” in *Out of Darkness, Let Light Shine*, performed by the St. Olaf Choir, dir. Kenneth Jennings, St. Olaf Records E 1840, 1991.

¹⁴⁸ Randall Thompson, “The Garment of Praise,” in *Island of Hope: New American Choral Music*, performed by the New Amsterdam Singers, dir. Clara Longstreth, Albany Records TROY545, 2002.

complete context, a transcript of the entire speech is included in Appendix C, with the most relevant portions included here.

In the speech he talked directly about how other composers have viewed death, and how it can be seen as a “heritage of their feelings.” He said that history is all we ever study, and that it is basically “an inquiry into the way men felt and into the feelings which made them act the way they did.” Thompson thought of music as a special tool for the purpose of communicating feelings through time, more potent than literature, architecture, or painting:

The greatest composers have left us a heritage of their feelings. And the easiest and most accessible to us, the most readily comprehended, are the feelings which one might call ‘concrete.’ Music holds as many records of deep feeling as any other art and is, if anything, more intense in its power of communication of those feelings.¹⁴⁹

Thompson said that we can draw true inferences about composer’s feelings by experiencing their music; we have actual access to concrete feelings. To illustrate the concrete feelings of composers that can be communicated through music, Thompson used the issue of death as an example. He illustrated how several composers showed through music their own feelings on the subject, beginning with Johann Sebastian Bach’s depiction of the crucifixion in his Mass in B minor.

...let us draw a comparison with the *Crucifixus* of the B minor mass. Here there is no visual representation; only aural imagery, only pure feeling, pure sound. And yet to hear the *Crucifixus* is virtually to be present at the death of Our Lord. What Bach felt about that moment in history is so deep, so overwhelming, so incandescently, universally human that no mere narration or portrait or sculpture or poem could surpass it.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Randall Thompson, “Music: a mirror,” (lecture, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, May 22 1946). A hand-written copy of this speech is in the Houghton Library, from which the full transcript in Appendix C was prepared.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

Clearly, Thompson thought music to be more powerful than other arts in communicating affect, or an environment of feeling about a particular subject, as Bach did. He continued with other composers, contrasting the characters of the pieces they wrote concerning the same subject.

But what about death as it appears in the *Eroica* Symphony of Beethoven? There, there is grief – human, and then a glimpse of a country unstained by grief or struggle – not just a ‘heaven’ either, but a strong kind of happiness, – powerful, passionate, sublime.

How did a great mind like Brahms feel about the Grim Reaper? He saw the vanity of human wishes; all that was transitory was only a likeness; his portrayal of the after-life in *The Song of Fate* was of a kind of Persian loveliness and light; for the *Requiem* he portrays a kind of comfortable heaven in which ordinary persons (not necessarily *heroes*) find solace eternal.

How did R. Strauss feel about Death and about Transfiguration? ...in his tone-poem, an ordinary man dies and his soul goes to heaven, with harps strumming and trumpets blaring.

These are all different aspects of death, all given to us in what, ultimately, amounts to pure feeling about the subject – an element which is now and always has been recognized by all except pedants as indispensable to any genuine understanding or comprehension.¹⁵¹

By applying this speech to Thompson’s own *Requiem*, the piece can be rightly viewed as a personal statement. He was not making a detached musical statement that existed in abstraction, he was creating a piece of music that reflected his “concrete feelings” on the subject of death. Thompson was not restricted by the text in the *Requiem*, since he carefully assembled it himself. According to this view of music, when Thompson wrote the *Requiem*, he documented his feelings about death with the most powerful tool he had to communicate them.¹⁵²

This mirror, in fact, – devoid of all connotations such as birth, life, love, fate, tragedy, melancholy, joy, death, transfiguration—this mirror, I say, that gleams in music as in no other art, is as high—as supreme—an expression as the human spirit is capable of.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

Summary

The *Requiem* has a complex history, but the entire story is relevant to understanding why the piece should be more closely examined. Thompson's original vision of the piece was inspired by a personal relationship with a young choral director, and the realization of that vision was carried out by a careful assembly of a dramatic text. The message of the text can be seen as Thompson's personal statement on the reality of death, based on Thompson's own thoughts on how music is a record of a composer's feelings. Thompson was able to craft the text with great precision, and the musical realization was constructed with deference to the text in its dramatic intent, affect, and character. Thompson's compositional methods and reasoning in the broad construction were based on excellent practice. Initial critical response to the work was positive with caveats that are largely reflective of the specific performances the critics attended. Several prominent choral conductors felt it to be a worthy piece, but were hindered from performing the work for largely practical reasons.

A number of factors combined to keep the *Requiem* from achieving wide attention early in its history, including the quality of the premiere performances, an unusually slow process of publication, and the price of the retail score.

The following chapters focus only on the internal qualities of the *Requiem*, specifically its text setting. This analysis shows that the piece itself is not only well-constructed, it is a masterpiece in the art of joining text and music at all levels, from syllabic accent of individual words to dramatic pacing of the entire work.

PART II: TEXT SETTING ANALYSIS OF THE *REQUIEM*

Chapter 3: Introduction to the Text Setting Analysis

Randall Thompson and the Art of Text Setting

I think the reason I'm interested in choral music is that it brings me into close association with marvelous words. I have not set any dull or cheap poetry to music. I work with texts that, to me, have great beauty.... I would like to think that through setting texts of value I have brought people into touch with those texts.

—Randall Thompson¹⁵³

Randall Thompson was a master at wedding texts to music. His attention to text/music relationships—from prosody to affect to larger forms—was admired by colleagues and became the most distinctive feature of his choral music. While Thompson's harmonic language pushed no boundaries, his use of unique texts was notable, specifically prose. For that reason, many of his choral works could be appropriately analyzed through the lens of text setting, but the *Requiem* goes one step further. Not only did Thompson choose a unique text for this work, he spent six weeks crafting it himself.

In 1949, Elliot Forbes described Thompson's choral music thusly:

Four qualities exist in all of Thompson's choral music. The first is the invention of lines which, by their intervals, their rise and fall, and their points of rest, make the singing of them a matter of interest as well as ease. The second is the setting of every phrase of text into a texture of voices that serves not only to sound the words but also to bring out their meaning by a particular choral color. The third is the rhythmic equivalent in music to the natural rhythm of the words when spoken. And the fourth is an organization of phrases, made clear by the use of passing cadences which by their relative strength indicate the different relationships existing between successive phrases.... A command of language and impeccable taste enable Thompson to achieve this. These four qualities—of line, color, prosody, form—will be apparent after an examination of his choral music as a whole.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ McGlivray, "The choral music of Randall Thompson," 285.

¹⁵⁴ Elliot Forbes, "The Music of Randall Thompson," *The Musical Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (Jan. 1949): 9.

Forbes recognized these traits in Thompson's choral music long before the *Requiem* was composed, but all of these features are present in the *Requiem* as well. With a text so large and multifaceted as that of the *Requiem*, it afforded Thompson many opportunities to do just what Forbes described. There are dozens of moods that change from phrase to phrase that Thompson reflected in musical affect and prosody. The *Requiem* also shows the larger-scale features that Forbes mentioned, which Thompson used to build dramatic tension both within and between movements.

Forbes was not unique in identifying text setting as Thompson's great achievement as composer of choral music. This trait was evident throughout his career and were recognized by others. Lloyd Pfautsch, a long-time choral conductor at Southern Methodist University, once attempted to commission a setting of the seven last words of Christ from Thompson, and wrote, "Personally, I hope that you will find it possible to accept because I have long admired your sensitive setting of English with special respect to verbal nuance and syllabic accent."¹⁵⁵ This recognition continued throughout Thompson's career. The author of his obituary in *The Musical Times* summarized Thompson's choral works by saying they were "characterized by their sensitivity to the text."¹⁵⁶ Clearly, though Thompson's harmonic language was diatonic and generally conservative, text setting is the feature of his music that is distinctive.

Randall Thompson's process of setting texts reveals why there is such a close link between words and music in his writing, and is also key to his consistent style. This

¹⁵⁵ Lloyd Pfautsch to Randall Thompson, May 31, 1954. Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 8: Folder "Illinois Wesleyan"), Houghton Library, Harvard University. Pfautsch was also a composer, and his most widely known work, *Musick's Empire*, shows a similar care for prosody.

¹⁵⁶ "Randall Thompson," *The Musical Times* 125, no. 1699 (September 1984): 524.

process also justifies Forbes's first point, that the melodic lines in Thompson's music are readily singable. In his speech, "Writing for the Amateur Chorus: a Chance and a Challenge," Thompson gave advice on how to set texts well:

Having found your text, commit it to memory. Sing it to yourself in a thousand different ways. Decide on the best, the most fitting melody for it. Don't worry about progressions; let the tune and the words determine the form. Let the music follow the *rhetoric* of your texts. Don't set a question in the text with a full cadence in the tonic. Don't place subordinate clauses in the very heart of the central tonality. Above all, place the voices where they will *sound*. Avoid inappropriate chromaticism. Avoid extreme ranges. Avoid unnecessary *divisi* in the individual parts. And finally sing the individual parts to yourself. If you *can* sing them, it doesn't necessarily mean that they are good; but if you *can't* sing them, there's something wrong, and you had better do some retouching.¹⁵⁷

Later in the essay, Thompson did warn about not following "slavishly" to the text in a musical setting. Instead, he says that there are no "hard-and-fast rules." Good taste will allow a composer to get the text and music to work together, such as avoiding melismas and other stresses on unaccented syllables and unimportant words. He said that while the music "seems to grow out of the words," it still "must not be sacrificed to them."

Thompson's musical setting is intimately bound to the text, but never in a prescriptive way, like *musique mesureé* in the sixteenth-century French chanson.

The best rule remains: sing the words to yourself. If the melody brings out the feeling of the text and the significance of the important words and the important syllables, then the prosody is good – then the musical rhythm of the poetry or prose are blended to create the rhythmic ebb and flow of the choral parts.¹⁵⁸

Randall Thompson's feelings on the matter were the same decades later, when he shared his personal method in an interview with McGilvray:

As far as setting texts to music, I try to let the text lead me by the hand...by the neck, because I want there to be a wedding between the words and the music. I try

¹⁵⁷ Randall Thompson, "Writing for the Amateur Chorus: A Chance and a Challenge," in *Randall Thompson: A Choral Legacy*, ed. Alfred Mann (Boston: E. C. Schirmer, 1983), 15.

¹⁵⁸ Thompson, "Writing for the Amateur Chorus," 17.

to set a given line in a dozen—hundred different ways and to set forth words in the best way. I spend a great deal of time; write lots of notes, scratch paper notes, and tear them up.¹⁵⁹

McGilvray went on to point out that this “process of elimination” meant that Thompson did not revisit or revise works after they were completed because he had discarded all other possibilities at the outset.¹⁶⁰ The *Requiem* demonstrates this: Thompson had the time and opportunity to revise the work before publication, but made no substantial changes to the music.

Approach to the Text Setting Analysis

The following five chapters analyze how Randall Thompson allowed the text to shape the music of the *Requiem* and in turn offer conclusions about how the work should be prepared and performed. This is done by first looking at the structure of the text as it was assembled by Thompson. Aspects of the scriptural sources, dramatic pacing, and poetic structures are all analyzed for both individual lines and entire parts of the work together. The second stage of analysis is the examination of the musical setting, and how it reflects the rhythm, poetic structure, dramatic story line, musical affect, and character of the text. These ties are seen in melodic shape, tonality, form, texture, and many other musical features. Following this investigation into the text and music, attention turns to applying the analysis to preparing the *Requiem* for performance. This analysis provides interpretive ideas based on connections between the text, its musical setting, and Thompson’s own indications. Parameters such as tempo, choral tone, diction, dynamics, and rehearsal strategies can all further enhance the features of the text and the musical setting, so suggestions are given for various aspects of performance.

¹⁵⁹ McGilvray, “The Choral Music of Randall Thompson,” 31.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

Definition of Terms

The *Requiem* has structural features that can be confusing in prose unless some terms are used consistently. To that end:

1. The word “choir” will be used to speak of a group of choral singers. The *Requiem* is written for two distinct choirs, and they are referred to as “Choir I” (or “the chorus of the faithful” or “the faithful”) and “Choir II” (or “the chorus of mourners” or “the mourners”). When Choir II is divided into two choirs, they are referred to as “Choir IIa” and “Choir IIb.” The only exceptions to this are in direct quotes from Randall Thompson, who wrote of the two choirs as “Chorus I” and “Chorus II.”
2. To avoid confusion with “choir,” the word “chorus” is used to speak of sections of music within the *Requiem*. Except in quotes from Thompson, or in conjunction with “of the faithful” and “of mourners,” the word “chorus” refers to a passage of music, not a group of singers.
3. The *Requiem* is divided in five parts, which are identified with the word “Part” capitalized followed by a roman numeral (I, II, etc.). Within the larger parts are individual “movements” that are made clear in the score. The word “section” is reserved for sections of music within movements. As identified in the preface, when Parts I-V are referred to by their titles, they will appear in quotations (e.g. Part II, “The Triumph of Faith”). Also, the titles of individual movements within the larger parts will be given in italics (e.g. *Why make ye this ado?*, from “The Triumph of Faith.”

4. The word “voice part” is used for the divisions of the choir, and are sometimes abbreviated (S. for Soprano, A. for Alto, T. for Tenor, and B. for Bass). When referring to voice parts in specific choirs, the appropriate roman numeral is added (e.g. S. I for “Sopranos of Choir I”).
5. When specific vowel and consonant sounds are referred to, they are placed in brackets, and represent the sounds as identified in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). For example, the word “beauty” appears in IPA as [ˈbju ti].
6. All musical examples are music of Randall Thompson, unless specifically noted otherwise in the caption.

Chapter 4: Part I, “Lamentations”

Lamentations: The Text

The *Requiem* is a dramatic dialogue, played out between two characters: the “chorus of the faithful,” played by Choir I; and the “chorus of mourners,” played by Choir II. The first act of the drama follows the general story of the “Elizabethan tragedy” that Thompson had in mind—it identifies the characters and their conflict, but develops the plot minimally. Both choirs are involved, but Choir II is by far more prominent, and unlike Parts II-V, the text and music of “Lamentations” is arranged in a single movement.

On the first page of the engraved score, the text of the *Requiem* is printed in its entirety, using italicized text for the phrases sung by Choir I, and regular type for Choir II (fig. 4.1).¹⁶¹ Thompson also included scriptural references, which show both the complexity and the diverse biblical sources on which he drew.¹⁶² For this analysis, I will print the text for each movement before discussing it, but will separate the texts further to delineate the lines sung by the two choirs by placing them parallel to each other in the order that they appear in the music.

¹⁶¹ In the manuscript score, the text of each Part I-V preceded its respective section. It was written in calligraphy by Thompson.

¹⁶² All of the texts were drawn from the King James Version of the Bible except for *Thou hast given him*, which comes from Psalm 21 as translated in the Common Book of Prayer.

REQUIEM

I

LAMENTATIONS

Lamentations, and mourning,
and weeping.
*Mourn not, weep not, cry not,
grieve not.*
The joy of our heart is ceased; our
dance is turned into mourning.
*Refrain thy voice from weeping
and thine eyes from tears.*
Mourn.
*Neither shalt thou mourn nor weep,
neither shall thy tears run down.*
Mourn.
*Grieve not, cry not; mourn not,
nor weep.*

Ezek. 2:10
Neh. 8:9; Luke 8:52;
Job 36:13; Eph. 4:30
Lam. 5:15
Jer. 31:16
Ezek. 24:16
Eph. 4:30; Job 36:13;
Neh. 8:9

II

THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH

Why make ye this ado and weep?
Man that is born of a woman is of
few days and full of trouble.
He cometh forth like a flower and is
cut down; he fleeth also as a
shadow, and continueth not. All
flesh shall perish together, and
man shall turn again unto dust.
What man is he that liveth, and shall
not see death?
How is it that ye have no faith?
Behold we die, we perish, we all
perish.
The just shall live by his faith.
Shall we be consumed with dying?
*The eternal God is thy refuge and
underneath are the everlasting
arms.*
The righteous perisheth, and no man
layeth it to heart:
*Everlasting joy shall be unto them,
and merciful men are taken away.*
Everlasting joy shall be unto them.
By the blast of God they perish and
by the breath of his nostrils are
they consumed.
Everlasting joy shall be unto them.
How long, Lord? wilt thou hide
thyself forever? Shall thy wrath
burn like fire?
*His anger endureth but a moment;
in his favour is life.*
Life? — Stay yourselves and wonder.
*Unto you it is given to know the
mystery of the kingdom of God.*
Stay yourselves and wonder.
*O Lord, thou hast brought up my
soul from the grave: thou hast
kept me alive.*
Behold ye, regard, and wonder
marvelously.
*Good tidings to the meek; he hath
sent me to bind up the broken-
hearted; to comfort all that
mourn; to give unto them beauty
for ashes, the oil of joy for
mourning, the garment of praise
for the spirit of heaviness.*
Behold ye, regard, and wonder
marvelously.

Mark 5:39
Job 14:1
Job 14:2; 14:15
Ps. 89:48
Mark 4:9
Num. 17:12
Hab. 2:4
Num. 17:13
Deut. 33:27
Isa. 61:7
Isa. 57:1
Job 4:9
Ps. 89:46
Ps. 30:5
Isa. 29:1
Mark 4:11
Ps. 30:3
Hab. 1:5

III

THE CALL TO SONG

*Be filled with the spirit, singing and
making melody in your heart to
the Lord.*
None answered.

Eph. 5:18, 19
Judg. 19:28

*Be filled with the spirit, singing and
making melody in your heart to
the Lord.*

But none answered.
*Be filled with the spirit, singing and
making melody in your heart to
the Lord.*

None giveth answer.
*O let the nations be glad and sing
for joy.*

*But they hearkened not nor inclined
their ear.*

*Sing unto him. Talk ye of all his
wondrous works.*

Sing unto him . . .

Utter a song . . .

*Can I hear any more the voice of
singing men and singing women?*

Blessed be the Lord God, who only
doeth wondrous things.

Judg. 19:28

Job 35:12

Ps. 67:4

Jer. 7:24

1 Chron. 16:9

Judg. 5:12

2 Sam. 19:35

Ps. 72:18

IV

THE GARMENT OF PRAISE

Sing with the spirit.
I will sing with the spirit
and sing with the understanding
also.

and I will sing with the understand-
ing also.

*Let everything that hath breath
praise the Lord.*

*Let the inhabitants of the rock sing,
let them shout from the top of
the mountains.*

Break forth into singing, ye
mountains, O forest and every
tree therein.

*Let them give glory unto the Lord
and declare his praise in
the islands.*

Let the earth rejoice; let the multi-
tude of isles be glad thereof.

Praise him all ye stars of light.
Let the heaven and earth praise him.

The morning stars sang together,
and all the sons of God shouted
for joy.

For they went at large like horses
and leaped like lambs, praising
thee, O Lord.

I am their music,
and now am I their song.

I will praise the Lord with my
whole heart;

till he fill thy mouth with laughing
and thy lips with rejoicing.

*Ye were sometimes darkness, but now
are ye light in the Lord:
walk as children of light.*

The Lord shall be unto thee an
everlasting light, and thy God
thy glory.

*Return unto thy rest, O my soul;
for the Lord hath dealt
bountifully with thee.*

Return unto thy rest, O my soul.

Thou hast given him his heart's
desire, and hast not withholden
the request of his lips.

He asked life of thee, and thou
gavest him a long life: even for
ever and ever.

Amen and amen.

Alleluia.

1 Cor. 14:15

Ps. 150:6

Isa. 42:11

Isa. 44:23

Isa. 42:12

Ps. 97:1

Ps. 148:3

Ps. 69:34

Job 38:7

Wisd. of Solomon 19:9

Lam. 3:63

Job 30:9

Ps. 111:1

Job 8:21

Eph. 5:8

Isa. 60:19

Ps. 116:7

Ps. 21:2, 4

Ps. 89:52

— from The Holy Bible

Figure 4.1. Text page (p. 2) of the engraved *Requiem* score (E. C. Schirmer, 1963).

I. Lamentations

Choir IChoir II

Mourn not, weep not, cry not, grieve not.
(Nehemiah 8:9, Luke 8:52, Job 36:13, Ephesians 4:30)

Refrain thy voice from weeping
and thine eyes from tears.
(Jeremiah 31:16)

Neither shalt thou mourn nor weep,
Neither shall thy tears run down
(Ezek. 24:16)

Grieve not, cry not, mourn not, nor weep.
(Ephesians 4:30, Job 36:13, Nehemiah 8:9)

Lamentations, and mourning, and weeping.
(Ezekiel 2:10)

The joy of our heart is ceased;
Our dance is turned into mourning.
(Lamentations 5:15)

Mourn.

Mourn.

The characters played by the two choirs are clear from the very beginning. Choir II assumes the role of the mourners, lamenting the loss of their loved ones. Choir I comforts the mourners not as friends but rather as the souls of the faithful and the subject of the mourning. The texts fit well the overall drama that Thompson had in mind for Part I: “The mourners grieve and no efforts of the faithful can console them.”¹⁶³ The texts for Choir II can be viewed generally as “laments,” and the phrases for Choir I, “comforts.” The text is drawn from eight verses in seven different books of the Bible. Five of the seven books are used again later in the work, with the books of Job and Jeremiah receiving a lot of attention. This is understandable given the subject of the work, as the

¹⁶³ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 33.

books of Job, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Ezekiel are all scriptures that either tell of or reflect on great agony and distress. As a New Testament reference, Paul's letter to the Ephesians is drawn on again for the opening texts of Parts III and V. Because Choir II is more prominent and speaks first, their texts and music will be addressed before Choir I.

In the opening phrase, Choir II mourns inwardly. Their phrases are not complete thoughts or statements, but rather inward reflections on "lamentations, mourning, and weeping." If this phrase were an external expression, Choir II could be understood as someone looking upon "mourning" and identifying it, but is better understood as the mourners stating internal thoughts rolling within them. The second phrase that Choir II sings is then understood as their outward weeping ("The joy of our hearts is ceased..."), which begins the actual dialogue, drawing statements of comfort from Choir I ("Mourn not, weep not, cry not, grieve not"). In contrast to their first inward lines, Choir II expresses their grief outwardly with specific statements about their condition, and does so in permanent terms. The "joy" they speak of is not muffled, it has ceased; their "dance" was not just slowed, but transformed.

Choir I delivers its messages of comfort in three statements, all with similar messages. The first is its four-part instruction to the mourners to cease their weeping ("Mourn not, weep not, cry not, grieve not"). The second is the same message but is phrased more poetically and specifically ("Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears"). After those two commands do not bring the mourners comfort, the third statement shifts the message to prophetic terms, which foreshadows the rest of the drama to come ("Neither shalt thou..."). Dramatically, the text progresses thus: the faithful tried to comfort the mourners, who then responded with more weeping, so the faithful stated

positively that the mourners will be comforted. At the end of Part I, it is now the mission of Choir I to fulfill their prophecy and comfort the mourners.

Thompson introduced symbolic uses of text immediately in Part I of the *Requiem*. The first is in the assembly of Choir I's opening line: "Mourn not, weep not, cry not, grieve not," which was assembled from four different biblical references. Nowhere else in the work does Thompson create a single phrase out of multiple books, but in this case it may have been an effort to show that the theme of "comfort" runs through the whole of scripture. To do that Thompson took those phrases from four distinct sections of scripture. "Mourn not" comes from Nehemiah, which is among the historical books, and is meant to comfort the distressed Israelites hearing a reading of the Law. "Weep not" comes from the gospels, and was spoken by Jesus Christ to the crowds mourning the death of Jairus' daughter, before Christ raised her from the dead. "Cry not" is from the book of Job, when Elihu spoke to Job after Job's family and livelihood had been taken from him. And "grieve not" is from a New Testament letter, when Paul warns the Ephesians not to grieve the Holy Spirit by sinning. With Thompson's careful assembly of this entire text, assembling this statement from the four major portions of scripture was intentional.

A second symbolic use of text in "Lamentations" is the poetic contrast between the texts of Choirs I and II. At this point in the *Requiem* drama, the characters contrast completely in their emotions, so Thompson created this contrast immediately in his choice of poetic meter. The initial statements of Choir II are characterized by the rolling rhythm of anapest (weak-weak-strong): La-men-ta-tions, and mourn-ing, and weep-ing. Choir I responds with contrastingly emphatic trochee (strong-weak): Mourn not, weep

not, cry not, grieve not. Though the poetic feet do not continue as precisely in the following lines, the statements of Choir II do remain primarily in triple meters, while Choir I remains duple. Noted in the back of one of Thompson's personal *Requiem* scores was an additional poetic note, about assonance in the opening Choir I line. Assonance between "weep not" and "grieve not" is obvious, the other pair more approximate.¹⁶⁴

Lamentations: The Musical Setting

This is the longest single movement in the entire *Requiem*, but has the least amount of text of any of the major sections (Parts I-V). It is also technically one of the most difficult, with the principle burden resting on Choir II. Thompson refers to the structure as "broadly ternary,"¹⁶⁵ and an examination of the overall structure does reveal three major sections with a return of the original key area in the final section (fig. 4.2). In addition to the three major sections there is also an introduction and a ten-measure retransition. When those two sections are considered separately, each of the major sections have several shared features: all are twenty-two measures in length; have distinct key areas; feature each of the four main musical ideas, two from each choir; and all begin with a "lament" from Choir II with a "comfort" from Choir I given in response. Because

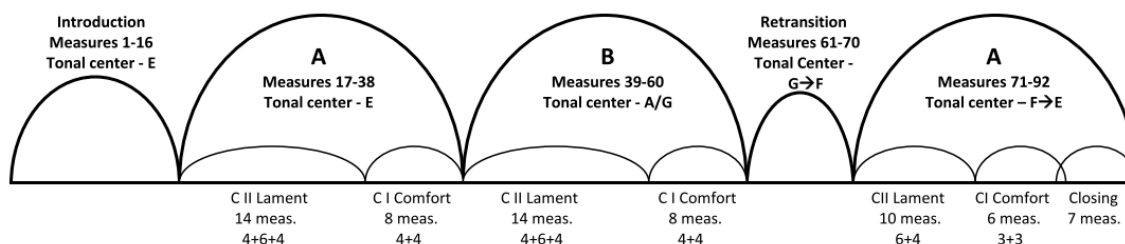


Figure 4.2. Formal map of "Lamentations."

¹⁶⁴ Thompson, *Requiem*, corrected manuscript score.

¹⁶⁵ Thompson, "Notes on a *Requiem*," 39.

their only major difference is tonal center, the B section is in many ways an actively transposing version of A, rather than a contrasting section. Each of the four musical themes are present in all major sections of the movement, so the “broadly ternary” structure remains in the background and the surface feeling is more episodic, with the choirs taking turns speaking in a conversation.

Other than providing unity and musical pacing, the broad structure is not reflective of a text structure. Instead, the text is delivered in episodes throughout the movement with distinct musical ideas for each piece of text. The dramatic and poetic contrasts between the two choirs identified previously are just as evident in the musical settings of their individual lines, and thus it is most practical to talk about each choir separately. Choir II is both more prominent and sings immediately, so will be discussed first. All of the music for the movement is contained in four themes, two for each choir. Following the discussion of the music for each choir is a discussion of how the themes interact dramatically throughout the movement.

Choir II

“Lamentations” is one of two movements in the *Requiem* where Choir II is divided into its own double choir (hereafter referred to as Choirs IIa and IIb). This division allows Thompson to feature constant “waves of lament” for the choir in reflection of their distress.¹⁶⁶ This double-chorus setting continues throughout the movement and provides a constant flow of eighth notes whenever Choir II is singing. There are two principle musical ideas for Choir II, both stated in their basic form with the first phrase of text in the introduction. Each of the subsequent periods of “lament” contain both ideas (see fig. 4.3).

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

The image displays a musical score for the 'Lamentations' movement, specifically a reduction of the parts for Choir II. The score is organized into two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 6, with parts for Choir IIa (treble clef) and Choir IIb (bass clef). The second system covers measures 7 through 13, with parts for IIa and IIb. The time signature is 12/8. The harmonic texture is characterized by a static E minor triad (E, G, B) in the bass of both parts, with the upper parts providing a diatonic melody. The notation includes various rests and chordal structures, with some measures featuring more complex textures in the upper parts.

Figure 4.4. “Lamentations,” reduction of Choir II, measures 1-13.

Thompson sought. Harmonically, Choir II does not travel far, beginning each measure on some form of an E minor triad for the first six measures, then deviating only slightly and leading back again to E minor triads in measure 12 (fig. 4.4, reduction of mm. 1-12, Choir II). The music focuses diatonically on E phrygian. To increase the intensity, Thompson gradually raised the dynamic from *pianississimo* to *forte* over the course of measures 1-12, building a dynamic tension that finally releases in measure 13 with the entrance of the second musical theme.

From a dramatic standpoint, with this first musical “mourning” theme Thompson painted a picture of the inner nature of weeping. Earlier the contrast was made between the two types of text that Choir II sings in this movement: Theme 1 is Thompson’s depiction of inner reflection, in contrast to the outward grieving. The static harmonic

motion and rolling eighth notes reflect perfectly the inner turmoil of grief—a grieving person has thoughts that race but lead nowhere. The darkness is further emphasized by the scoring, with parallel thirds between the tenors and basses in almost every case.

As it appears later in the movement, Theme 1 takes on different shapes and purposes. Because of its atmospheric texture, it most frequently appears concurrently with a separate theme from Choir, as a background: 1) it is used as the structural underpinning whenever Choir I is stating their theme (Theme 3) on the text “Mourn not, weep not, cry not, grieve not” (fig. 4.5); 2) when Choir I is using its second theme, the rolling eighth notes appear below it at various times to introduce the return of the mourning Choir II (fig. 4.6); and 3) it is used in a fragmented form as embellishment (mm. 81-85, example appears later in fig. 4.11). Apart from the introduction, the Choir II first theme appears two more times without a concurrent Choir I theme: in its original form at the return of section A from measures 77-80, and in a modified form during the retransition from 65-70.

Theme 2 – Outward Mourning

After grief has built in the thoughts of the mourners for twelve measures, their feelings burst outward, introducing the second musical theme. This second theme is stated in its basic form by Choirs IIa and IIb in measures 13-17 (fig. 4.7, p. 84), and is characterized by two-measure phrases and a cascade of seventh chords that never resolve. The perpetual downward motion is facilitated by the theme opening with a large upward leap in the soprano to a high pitch, which then continues to step down in parallel thirds with the basses. The altos and tenors also step down, but move on different beats.

Musical score for "Lamentations," measures 27-39. The score is written for a choir with four parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The music is in 3/4 time and features a variety of dynamics including *p*, *mf*, *mp*, *pp*, and *dim*. The lyrics are "The joy of the Lord is our strength" and "The joy of the Lord is our strength". The score includes a variety of musical notations such as whole, half, quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, rests, and slurs. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Figure 4.5. "Lamentations," measures 27-29.

Musical score for "Lamentations," measures 37-39. The score is written for a choir with four parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The music is in 3/4 time and features a variety of dynamics including *p*, *mf*, *mp*, *pp*, and *dim*. The lyrics are "The joy of the Lord is our strength" and "The joy of the Lord is our strength". The score includes a variety of musical notations such as whole, half, quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, rests, and slurs. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Figure 4.6. "Lamentations," measures 37-39.

ta - tions, and mourn - - - lam - - - en - ta - tions, and - - - ing, and weep - ing, and mourn - - - ing, and weep - ing.

Figure 4.7. “Lamentations,” Choir II, measures 13-18: “Theme 2”

For the upper three parts these downward steps are embellished with more neighbor tones, resulting in a continuation of the constant eighth-note pulse. With the addition of the neighbor tones and the offset parallel motion, the chords seem to “melt” downward rather than step.

The transition from inward to outward mourning is not made fully during the introduction, as Theme 2 is used only for the text “and mourning, and weeping.” Every other appearance of Theme 2 in the movement does make that transition, with the parallel texts “the joy of our hearts is ceased” and “our dance is turned into mourning.” Though not in perfect rhythm with each other, Thompson used the same music for these phrases by aligning the three strong syllables in each phrase: joy/dance, hearts/turned, and ceased/mourn(ing). The strong syllables occur on the first beats of subsequent measures with the weak beats placed on similarly weak parts of the measure. In all instances beyond the introduction, the basic phrase size is three rather than two measures, so the chords fall a greater distance but in the same manner.

The downward emotional feeling of the text is reinforced by the music in many ways. Not only does the chain of melting seventh-chords reflect the plight of the mourners, the effect is deepened by the use of only lower neighbors for embellishing tones (Theme 1 had both upper and lower). Downward motion is also often tempered with contrary motion between voices, but here there is none. Beyond the music, the text used for Theme 2 paints has its own downward motion: each phrase makes a journey from a positive word on an open vowel to a negative word on a more closed vowel (joy → mourn, dance → ceased).

Choir I

The “chorus of the faithful” delivers a message of comfort in this movement, and does so with two different themes. The first (Theme 3) is for the string of commands, “Mourn not, weep not, cry not, grieve not,” and the second (Theme 4) is used for the two longer phrases of text. Both themes are in direct musical contrast to the themes of Choir II, reflecting their opposite message. The poetic differences between the texts of the two choirs were addressed earlier: texts for Choir II are primarily in triple meters, and the texts of Choir I in duple. Thompson recognized that fact at the outset of this movement, writing simultaneously in compound meters for Choir II and a simple meter for Choir I. The distribution of voices further emphasizes the differences between the two choirs as they begin to sing. Choir II, divided further into two choirs, comes from a position of weakness when compared to Choir I, whose two themes are written in homophony. Thompson himself indicated the strength gained by these layers of contrast.

The subdivision of Chorus II into eight parts not only produces waves of lament: it has the additional advantage of making the unfluctuating, four-part block chords to which Chorus II is confined seem, by comparison, strong and firm in voicing words of consolation and promise.¹⁶⁷

Theme 3 – Mourn Not

Theme 3 is used as a direct contrast to Theme 1; they appear simultaneously in all but one instance (measure 71). In measures 17-20 the two themes are seen together for the first time in their purest form (fig. 4.8). Above the “waves of lament” from the mourners, Choir I provides strong block chords marked *tenuto*. The contrast is stark and immediate. While Choirs IIa and IIb murmur a single word for four measures, Choir I

¹⁶⁷ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 39-40.

The musical score consists of four staves, each representing a different vocal part. The lyrics are written below the notes, and dynamic markings are placed above or below the staves.

Staff 1 (Soprano):

- Measure 17: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 18: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 19: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 20: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.

Staff 2 (Alto):

- Measure 17: *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not.
- Measure 18: *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not.
- Measure 19: *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not.
- Measure 20: *pp* mourn, *pp* mourn, *pp* mourn, *pp* mourn.

Staff 3 (Tenor):

- Measure 17: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 18: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 19: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 20: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.

Staff 4 (Bass):

- Measure 17: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 18: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 19: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 20: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.

Staff 5 (Soprano):

- Measure 17: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 18: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 19: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 20: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.

Staff 6 (Alto):

- Measure 17: *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not.
- Measure 18: *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not.
- Measure 19: *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not, *p* Mourn not.
- Measure 20: *pp* mourn, *pp* mourn, *pp* mourn, *pp* mourn.

Staff 7 (Tenor):

- Measure 17: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 18: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 19: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 20: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.

Staff 8 (Bass):

- Measure 17: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 18: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 19: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.
- Measure 20: *mp* weep not, *mf* cry not, *f* grieve not.

Figure 4.8. "Lamentations," measures 17-20: Choir I Theme 3 over Choir II Theme 1.

makes clear, concise, and commanding statements. Each statement rises in pitch, unlike the constant descending motion of Choir II. In two of the four instances of this theme, Thompson also raised the dynamic level of each successive statement, until “grieve not” reaches a full *forte* dynamic.

It is also notable that for each of the two syllabic statements Thompson retains the same chord, but for the second syllable drops the upper three voices down one chord member. This naturally deemphasizes the weaker syllable and accentuates the trochee rhythm (strong-weak), while also distinguishing the triadic descents from the stepwise motion permeating the music of Choir II.

When this first theme appears later in the movement it retains much of this original shape and context. There are two instances where it is used only partially: in a pair of emphatic “mourn not” statements over theme two of Choir II (measures 71 and 74), and as a part of the closing material (measures 88-90).

Theme 4 – Refrain from Weeping

Theme 4 delivers the two longer phrases of text assigned to Choir I, and is again in block chords (fig. 4.9). Themes 1 and 3 often appeared together and had contrasting styles, and there is a similar relationship between Themes 2 and 4. Theme 4 confirms its contrasting duple meter almost immediately with a dotted-quarter/eighth note combination in the tenor (m. 34). Unlike the interaction between Themes 1 and 3 (which appeared simultaneously), Choir II sings their parallel theme as a response to Choir I’s commands delivered with Theme 4. For each appearance of Theme 4, the text “Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears” is repeated once.

f ma non troppo *poco a poco dim.* *mp* *mf*
 Re - frain thy voice from weep - ing and thine eyes from tears, re -

f ma non troppo *poco a poco dim.* *mp* *mf*
 Re - frain thy voice from weep - ing and thine eyes from tears, re -

f ma non troppo *poco a poco dim.* *mp* *mf*
 Re - frain thy voice from weep - ing and thine eyes from tears, re -

f ma non troppo *poco a poco dim.* *mp* *mf*
 Re - frain thy voice from weep - ing and thine eyes from tears, re -

35
 frain thy voice from weep - ing and thine
 frain thy voice from weep - ing and thine
 frain thy voice from weep - ing and thine
 frain thy voice from weep - ing and thine

dim. *p*
 eyes from tears.
dim. *p*
 eyes from tears.
dim. *p*
 eyes from tears.
dim. *p*
 eyes from tears.

Figure 4.9. "Lamentations," Choir I, measures 31-38: Theme 4.

Similar to Theme 2, Theme 4 progresses downward over two phrases, but does so in a completely different manner. Where the mourners allowed their theme to step down modally, the faithful respond with harmonies that include triads and seventh chords which resolve in functional ways. There are several important distinctions between these two descending themes (figs. 4.7 and 4.9): Choir I descends more quickly in general than Choir II; Choir I descends by whole steps compounding into major thirds, as opposed to Choir II's descent by mostly minor thirds in each measure; Choir I makes use of extensive chromatic pitches while Choir II remains strictly modal; and Choir I uses functional harmony and contrary motion while Choir II's motion remains parallel.

Thompson was intentional in his use of chromatic pitches at this moment in the piece, and in the few comments he made about this movement, he explained the extensive chromaticism of Theme 4:

It is perhaps significant, as a point of style, that no accidentals appear in this movement until the thirty-first measure. Then they pour forth—till, within six measures, every note of the scale has been flattened...to color the words “Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears.” The lowering of a single tone in this manner was a favorite expressive resource of the Renaissance. Here we might speak of a seven-fold manifestation of that resource.¹⁶⁸

Another melodic coloring appears on the word “weeping,” which is painted in the soprano by a descending half-step in the manner of a sighing gesture (fig. 4.9, m. 32, S.). This gesture is used again in Part II for the word “weep.”

Theme 4 appears three times in this movement. The first two occurrences are nearly identical except for key, and the third instance is modified to fit the final “prophetic” statement of text. To fit the longer text, Thompson condensed the two four-measure phrases (with repeated text) into one expanded phrase. This third “prophetic” instance is also unique in Choir II’s response—the first two times Theme 4 occurred they remained silent, but in this third instance the basses of Choirs IIa and IIb trade defiant *marcato* Theme 1 fragments below (fig. 4.10).

Dramatic progression

The four themes identified above interact throughout the “Lamentations” movement to show a dramatic progression, even though little text is used overall. Some general interactions between the four main themes have been discussed, but it is necessary to see how Thompson advanced a story line through the movement by making musical adjustments to the themes as the drama unfolds.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 40.

[illegible]

Figure 4.10. “Lamentations,” measures 81-86: Choir I Theme 4, expanded to fit “Neither shalt thou....” text.

The first twelve measures are an introduction, where Themes 1 and 2 are initially presented to paint the plight of the mourners. At the beginning they mourn inwardly. In measures 6-12, the pitch and dynamic level of Theme 1 gradually rises until Theme 2 enters *forte* in measure 13. Because Theme 2 is used for outward mourning, measures 13-16 can be seen as the beginning of the mourners' actual weeping.

In measure 17, section A begins as the faithful enter the scene and offer their first words of comfort to the actively weeping mourners, using the text and music of Theme 3. Underneath, Choir II has receded back into Theme 1 as their crying pauses to listen to the first comforts of Choir I. Choir II immediately responds with their first cohesive description of their grief, saying "the joy of our heart is ceased, our dance has turned into mourning." The faithful respond again with Theme 3, leading to Theme 4 (Choir I's initial "Refrain thy voice..." statement) in measure 31, which is colored heavily by the chromaticism identified by Thompson. This moment is also powerful because it is the first time that Choir II is silent, and thus the first cessation of the rolling eighth-note pulse. As identified earlier, the ends of these Theme 3 phrases are embellished by subtle Theme 1 fragments (see fig. 4.6, p. 83).

Section B begins at measure 39, when the mourners lament again. The key center has moved to A, but Thompson varies and extends this Theme 2 lament. The return of Theme 3 "the joy of our heart has ceased" gains a hurried quality from Thompson's writing in 9/8 rather than 12/8, eliminating a beat in each statement. The lament is further intensified by a rise in *tessitura*, with the sopranos soaring to a high A. At the close of this more intense lament (m. 48), Thompson indicated an easing of tempo for the first time in the movement. The second round of comforting begins, first with Theme 3 (Choir

I) over Theme 1 (Choir II), a step lower in pitch and at far lower dynamics than the comforting in section A. This round of comfort is more somber in mood, with the addition of bass pedals to Theme 1 and the *mezzo piano* dynamic for Theme 4.

At this point there is a retransition that lasts from measures 61-70 (fig. 4.11). Only the mourners are involved, and dramatically it represents another period of increasing intensity for the mourners, that releases into another round of uncontrollable weeping in measure 71. To increase the dramatic tension, Thompson modified Theme 2 even further than he did in section B, again using a triple meter to hurry the action and layering Choirs IIa and IIb only one measure apart. After four measures of Theme 2, Thompson

Figure 4.11. "Lamentations," measures 60-70: Retransition based on Themes 1 and 2.

The musical score is divided into two systems, each containing four staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 12/8.

First System:

- Staff 1 (Soprano):** Lyrics: "joy of our heart is ceas'd." Dynamic: *mp*.
- Staff 2 (Alto):** Lyrics: "joy of our heart is ceas'd." Dynamic: *mp*.
- Staff 3 (Tenor):** Lyrics: "joy of our heart is ceas'd." Dynamic: *mp*.
- Staff 4 (Bass):** Lyrics: "joy of our heart is ceas'd." Dynamic: *mp*.

Second System:

- Staff 1 (Soprano):** Lyrics: "The joy of our heart is ceas'd." Dynamic: *pp* to *p* to *mf*.
- Staff 2 (Alto):** Lyrics: "The joy of our heart is ceas'd." Dynamic: *pp* to *p* to *mf*.
- Staff 3 (Tenor):** Lyrics: "The joy of our heart is ceas'd." Dynamic: *pp* to *p* to *mf*.
- Staff 4 (Bass):** Lyrics: "The joy of our heart is ceas'd." Dynamic: *pp* to *p* to *mf*.

Third System:

- Staff 1 (Soprano):** Lyrics: "mourn, mourn, mourn, mourn. The" Dynamic: *cresc.* to *f cresc.* to *rall.* (70).
- Staff 2 (Alto):** Lyrics: "mourn, mourn, mourn, mourn. The" Dynamic: *cresc.* to *f cresc.* to *rall.* (70).
- Staff 3 (Tenor):** Lyrics: "mourn, mourn, mourn, mourn. The" Dynamic: *cresc.* to *f cresc.* to *rall.* (70).
- Staff 4 (Bass):** Lyrics: "mourn, mourn, mourn, mourn. The" Dynamic: *cresc.* to *f cresc.* to *rall.* (70).

Fourth System:

- Staff 1 (Soprano):** Lyrics: "mourn, mourn, mourn, mourn. The" Dynamic: *cresc.* to *f cresc.* to *rall.* (70).
- Staff 2 (Alto):** Lyrics: "mourn, mourn, mourn, mourn. The" Dynamic: *cresc.* to *f cresc.* to *rall.* (70).
- Staff 3 (Tenor):** Lyrics: "mourn, mourn, mourn, mourn. The" Dynamic: *cresc.* to *f cresc.* to *rall.* (70).
- Staff 4 (Bass):** Lyrics: "mourn, mourn, mourn, mourn. The" Dynamic: *cresc.* to *f cresc.* to *rall.* (70).

Figure 4.11. (continued).

used six measures of Theme 1 to masterfully build towards the climax at measure 71.

First, Choirs IIa and IIb trade their mourning phrases in their typical way, with a measure each. This exchange accelerates to two beats per choir, and eventually to one beat, which Thompson combined intensified with an *accelerando*, dynamic increase, and rising pitch level. Finally, a climax is reached in measure 71 with all voices singing *fortissimo*.

The return of section A is truncated, but the weeping does settle quickly during a relatively standard iteration of Theme 2 from measures 71-76. Measures 77-80 are the most obvious return of the section A material, as the mourners return back to where they started at the opening, murmuring in E Phrygian. When Choir I returns with their “prophetic” statement in measure 81, Choir II is not silent as before, but instead rumble obstinately with *marcato* articulation. An introduction of chromaticism into Choir II’s music delivers a mixed message in the closing section. While their attitude of mourning is unwavering, Choir II actively participates in Choir I’s chromatic language in measures 86-90; elsewhere in the movement they are dogmatic in their commitment to mode. Over the course of five measures, Choir II gradually adds more F-, C-, and G-sharps to their lines. At first, these chromatic alterations are inconsistent and create several cross-relations between voices in measures 86-90, but by the final cadence Choir II has made a full transition to E major (fig. 4.12). This can be seen as foreshadowing the eventual triumph of Choir I’s message of comfort.

Adagissimo (♩ = ♩ del precedente) 31

The musical score consists of three systems, each with four staves (two vocal staves and two piano staves). The tempo is Adagissimo, with a note value of ♩ = ♩ del precedente. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "cry not, mourn not, nor weep." The music is characterized by a slow, mournful melody with many ties and a piano accompaniment of eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamics include (p), (pp), and dim. A rehearsal mark "90" is placed above the first staff of each system.

Figure 4.12. "Lamentations," measures 89-92.

Performance Considerations

Overall

Because the mourners are eventually persuaded by the faithful later in the drama, this opening movement depicts the greatest emotional disparity between Choirs I and II. The individual themes that constitute all of the music for this movement are closely wedded to the poetry, message, and affect of their respective texts, features that should be emphasized in the resulting performance.

Part I illustrates Thompson's adjustments in tempo indications between the manuscript and the published score. The original tempo was marked as dotted-quarter note = 50,¹⁶⁹ and increased to 60 in the engraved score. The tempo of the Harvard performance hovered at or below a pulse of 50 and feels somewhat lethargic.¹⁷⁰ At this tempo, the undulating eighth notes are slow enough that they begin to compete with the large beats for prominence, and the rolling or throbbing effect that they are meant to produce is thus lost. The only other complete recording has the opposite problem: in the Catholic University of America performance in 1966, the tempo was far too fast, remaining around dotted-quarter note = 80.¹⁷¹ At that speed, the affect becomes less like grieving and more like fright; the mourners sound as if they are fleeing a pursuer. Thompson's revised tempo strikes the balance well, so a pulse of 60 is ideal and should be the director's aim in performance. A director may be tempted to go faster to facilitate breath management, since many musical features in this movement—long phrases, *divisi*,

¹⁶⁹ This pulse indicated actually refers to quarter notes for Choir I and dotted-quarter notes for Choir II, with their different meters, but the pulse is the same.

¹⁷⁰ Randall Thompson, *Requiem*, Harvard Glee Club and Radcliffe Choral Society, dir. Elliot Forbes, Technicord T15-16, 1959.

¹⁷¹ Randall Thompson, *Requiem*, University Chorus of the Catholic University of America, dir. Michael Cordovana, 1966.

ubiquitous downward lines—encourage flattening. If the indicated performance tempo is clearly established early in the rehearsal process, it would give the singers sufficient time to practice the breath pacing necessary and eliminate the need for an adjustment. Another challenge in this movement is to maintain a steady tempo, rather than slightly stretching cadences and other musical seams. Thompson adjusted the tempo in only two places to increase the dramatic effect, and those moments would lose their potency if the pulse is not otherwise stable.

In such a relatively long movement of steady pulse and consistent textures, dynamic pacing takes on great importance as a dramatic tool. As in matters of tempo, the indications in the score, properly executed, will produce the appropriate effect. At almost every vocal entry a new dynamic is indicated, enhanced by adjustments with crescendos and decrescendos within the line. At almost any moment, the dynamic is either gradually increasing or decreasing, and its pacing and goals need to be controlled precisely. For example, from the principal climax at measure 71 is followed by the next *pianissimo* marking only six measures later, and the decrescendo must be managed carefully to not happen too suddenly. In the four statements of Theme 3, Choir I must sing each phrase in successively larger dynamics without achieving the highest level too quickly (e.g. fig. 4.8, mm. 17-20). Care must also be taken to pace the dynamics of the entire piece and the singers' voices. This opening movement is most taxing for Choir II, who may be tempted to over-sing because of the heavy division of parts. *Forte* dynamics should be kept at a moderate level to help vocal endurance. Large-scale pacing is also important—the largest climax of the work is at the end of Part III, not measure 71 of Part I, so the largest dynamics of “Lamentations” should be tempered in that context.

In addition to tempo indications, marked articulations must be strictly observed. Thompson made scrupulous use of articulation markings in the score. For example, in the four measures from 81-85 alone, he indicated *dolce*, *marcato*, *legato*, and marked *tenuto* on various lines and notes. Choir I is often marked *tenuto* in contrast to Choir II's *dolce*, so those articulations must be precisely executed.

Another articulation issue that could arise is that of ending consonants. Though the point seems small, it is important to note that, throughout the *Requiem*, Thompson regularly tied small notes to the ends of held pitches to indicate the placement of a final consonant or shadow vowel. Every time that he meant to represent the final consonant with one of those small note values, he would place a staccato on the final pitch.¹⁷² This happens once in “Lamentations,” in measure 15 at the end of the word “mourning” (fig. 4.13); the staccato eighth note indicates the placement of the final [ŋ] sound. This contrasts with the second example in figure 4.13 (which has no staccato marking); this and similar tied eighths should be held for their indicated values.



Figure 4.13. “Lamentations,” Choir II, measure 15; and Choir I, measure 34.

¹⁷² This way of indicating final consonants goes back to early compositions, for example, in “May Every Tongue” from *Americana*, measures 7-12; and in “Howl ye” from *The Peaceable Kingdom*, measure 75.

Choir I

In light of the contrast that Thompson imparted to the music to differentiate the characters, the two choirs must realize their characters in very different ways. Choir I plays the role of the souls of the faithful, who must project unflinching resolve and optimism in their comforting of the mourners. Their overall tone for Choir I in “Lamentations” should be more vibrant and confident than Choir II.

For the Theme 3 music, Choir 1 must closely observe two musical ideas for their character. First, the articulation of Theme 3 should deliver a stark contrast to the rolling *legato* mourning that accompanies it. Thompson marked all of the pitches in Theme 3 *tenuto*, requiring the singers to add a degree of weight to each pitch. This marking also invites them to add a small space between the chords to facilitate clear diction. “Mourn,” “weep,” and “grieve” should receive small shadow vowels before the word “not” in order to communicate them clearly. The undulating backdrop will not aid in communicating this text, so the diction must be clear and precise. All four initial words need initial consonants sounding before the beat so that the full vowels can be heard on the beat. Thompson helped to deemphasize the word “not” in each case by descending in pitch, but it should receive a smaller dynamic as well without losing the indicated weight of the *tenuto*. The final ‘t’s should be placed precisely as well. Secondly, the terraced dynamics, which are present in most iterations of Theme 3, must be properly executed. The series of dynamic levels is different each time, and will need to be rehearsed and balanced with the similarly increasing dynamics of Choir II.

Theme 4 is repetitive, thus easily executed once entry pitches and initial intervals are established. The overall affect should be strong and resolute, but it is not marked

tenuto like Theme 3. To produce this effect, Choir I must execute all consonants quickly and establish vowels immediately in order to project a feeling of resolve that contrasts with Choir II's more covered and dark tone. The poetic rhythm of this text also contrasts with its parallel in theme two of Choir II, so the appropriate text stress should be strictly observed.

Additionally, the entry to Theme 4 is different each time, and the distinctions will need to be rehearsed. In all three cases the entry pitches are drawn from Choir II, but in various ways. This is summarized in figure 4.14, where the underlying harmony provided by Choir II is shown on the lower staves, and the entry of Choir I on the upper staves. The first two instances (with the text “Refrain”) begin with an anacrusis in unison derived from the prevailing root pitch, and then voices leap to different places. The third instance has a text that begins with a strong syllable, thus it has no anacrusis and is a more difficult entry. Once the first full chord of each iteration is sung, the pattern remains fairly constant and will not present difficulties with pitch. Overall, Theme 4 does not pose

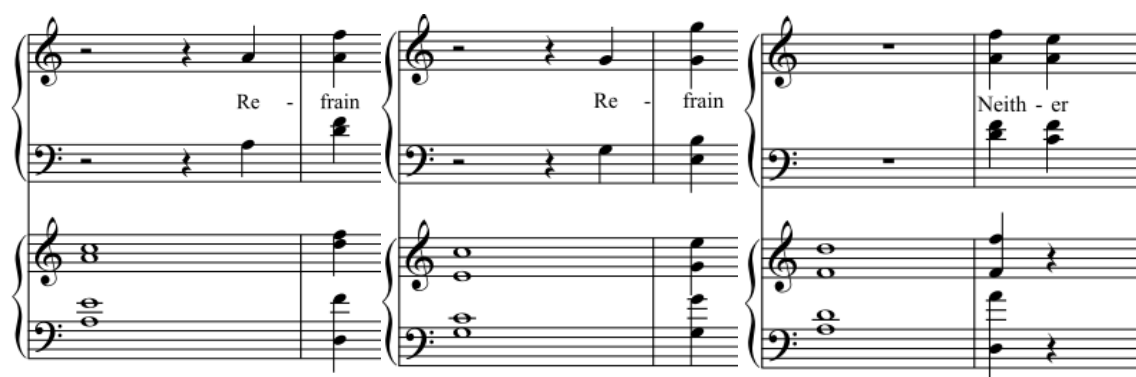


Figure 4.14. “Lamentations,” reductions of measures 30-31, 52-53, and 80-81.

the same risk of flatting that theme two does for Choir II, owing to the more functional harmony and contrary motion that controls the descent. The three instances also have dynamic distinctions. The first two require a managed decrescendo over two phrases, but the third is marked *forte dolce* for its duration.

Choir II

The tone color necessary for the character of the mourners can be drawn directly out of the music for Choir II. The first theme's rolling eighth notes will need to emphasize the larger beats, but not so much that it has a "lilting" feeling inappropriate to mourning. In the case of the Catholic University choir, the increased tempo gave the compound meter a hurried and nervous quality. When the neighbor tones are extracted, the lines can easily be rehearsed at the level of entire beats, to imprint the underlying stepwise lines in the minds of the singers (e.g. fig. 4.5, reduction of Choir II, mm. 1-12). Thompson reported that this rehearsal technique was used successfully for the premiere performance.¹⁷³

For much of the movement, Theme 1 is sung on the word "mourn," which provides a vowel that encourages the dark mood of the lament. At the outset, though, the word "lamentations" has the potential of being inappropriately bright on its accented vowels [æ] and [e], so those vowels may need to be darkened slightly with a covered tone. Often Theme 1 is supposed to be sung quite softly, so it will be necessary to ensure the singers use enough air to support a tone that is both full and soft. Thompson also called on Choir II to manage extended crescendos in this texture, which will require special coordination between the two choirs (IIa and IIb). In order to sustain a crescendo being passed between choirs, no choir should increase the dynamic too much over the

¹⁷³ Thompson, "Notes on a *Requiem*," 39.

course of their individual measure, or the long smooth crescendo could instead sound jagged. Another dynamic feature unique to this particular theme is dynamic swells that last only a measure, indicated by “hairpin” crescendos and decrescendos. All of these indications further deepen the character of the mourners, and should be observed closely.

On a practical level, most of the time Choirs IIa and IIb pass entry pitches directly to each other, or at least provide the basic harmony. The overlaps that do not follow that model will require special attention, such as the transitions in measures 19-21 (fig. 4.15).

The musical score for measures 19-21 of 'Lamentations' is presented for eight staves. The first four staves (measures 19-20) show a transition from a soft, mournful melody to a more active, rhythmic passage. The lyrics 'ing.', 'Mourn!', and 'mourn!' are written below the staves. The dynamics range from *pp* (pianissimo) to *mp* (mezzo-piano). Hairpin crescendos and decrescendos are used to indicate dynamic swells. The last four staves (measures 20-21) continue the active melody. The lyrics 'Mourn,' and 'mourn!' are written below the staves. The dynamics range from *pp* to *mp*. The score is marked with a '20' at the beginning of the fifth staff, indicating the start of measure 20.

Figure 4.15. *Lamentations*, measures 19-21. Transitions on the first beats of measures 20 and 21.

Management of the half-step and whole-step movements is generally not too difficult due to the strict modality. However, when this theme appears in fragments, it is often departing from the mode, and will thus require extra care in performance.

In Theme 2, Choir II faces the greatest challenges in terms of pitch and intonation. While it is helpful that the music for Choir II adheres strictly to the mode, the dozens of downward steps must all be performed exactly or the pitch could flat significantly. Thompson's music for Theme 2 encourages the correct character of the text immediately, so interpretation can again be derived directly from the score. Earlier it was noted that both phrases progress from more open to more closed vowels, so this contrast can be emphasized by adding a little brightness to the positive words "joy" and "dance" each time they are sung; allowing the darkness of tone to return as the lines descend in mood, pitch, and volume. As described in the section outlining the dramatic progression, this theme is used in a number of different ways and thus can have a distinct feeling each time. The first time it appears (measures 13-16, see fig. 4.8), it has the text "mourning, and weeping," and begins *forte* and descends to *piano*. This instance can be bold, as it is the first outward weeping of the mourners. The later instances are generally more subdued, and Thompson provides dynamics that ebb up and down as the reflections seem to gain intensity and then admit defeat. The moment of greatest pain in this theme is at the climax at measure 71, where it begins *fortissimo* and recedes to *pianissimo*.

Overall, the contrast between Choir I and II can be as great in matters of diction as it is in tone color. While the music for Choir I's statements encourages more crispness and clarity, Choir II can soften their diction by spending more time on hummed consonants and using fewer and softer shadow vowels. Without focus on hummed

consonants, Choir II's many statements of "mourn" would simply turn into a long stream of [o], which does not encourage text intelligibility. The consonant [r] is more problematic, as it is so present in Choir II's text. Generally, the [r] sound can be avoided without compromising intelligibility, and should be minimized on all instances of "mourn," "our," "heart," and "turned."

For both choirs, the keys to effective performance are rooted in the score, and a careful execution of that score will elicit a profound performance. The music for each line of text reflects careful attention to affect and mood, and Thompson gave additional indication not only of what to sing but also how to sing it.

Summary

Thompson's opening movement neatly introduced the contrast between the two characters. The brilliantly constructed text was the first key, but Thompson's musical approach enhanced the dramatic contrast. Some of the text use was symbolic in its sources, and showed inherent contrast in poetic rhythms.

With relatively brief texts, Thompson composed simple themes and cast an entire movement with only those resources. The structure of the text itself did not determine the form for the movement, just the nature of the themes. Thompson altered each of the themes as they appeared in episodes, creating a dramatic progression without any change of text. The overall ternary form is flexibly realized.

Finally, Thompson chose performance indications carefully and wisely to heighten the drama. Though Choirs I and II share an underlying pulse, their musical themes and texts call for quite different articulations and tone colors. The deep contrasts

displayed in this movement fulfill Thompson's dramatic goal for it: to introduce the two characters and set up their principle conflict of the entire drama.

Chapter 5: Part II, “The Triumph of Faith”

The Triumph of Faith: The Text

Before its text was selected, Part II of the drama was conceived as “a debate on immortality, won in the end by the faithful through a mystic demonstration of eternal life.”¹⁷⁴ Because it is cast as a debate, the text is lengthy and arranged as a dialogue between Choirs I and II. The debate is cast in three stages: in the first section the debate is begun as the mourners explain the root of their despair; the second is the debate itself, which gains intensity until the faithful succeed in convincing the mourners of the reality of life after death; and the third is a song of comfort, in which the faithful tell the mourners how to resolve their grief.

II: The Triumph of Faith

*Why make ye this ado?*Choir IChoir II

Why make ye this ado and weep?
(Mark 5:39)

Man that is born of a woman is of few days
and full of trouble.
(Job 14:1)

Why make ye this ado and weep?

He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down;
He fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not.
(Job 14:2)

Why make ye this ado and weep?

All flesh shall perish together,
and man shall turn again unto dust.
(Job 34:15)

What man is he?

What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?
(Psalm 89:48)

¹⁷⁴ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 33.

How is it that ye have no faith?
(Mark 4:40)

The just shall live by his faith.
(Habakkuk. 2:4)

The eternal God is thy refuge
and underneath are the everlasting arms.
(Deuteronomy 33:27)

Everlasting joy shall be unto them.
(Isaiah 61:7)

Everlasting joy shall be unto them.

Everlasting joy shall be unto them.

Everlasting joy shall be unto them.

Everlasting joy shall be unto them.

His anger endureth but a moment;
In his favour is life.
(Psalm 30:1)

Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of
God.
(Mark 4:11)

O Lord, thou has brought up my soul from the
grave, Thou hast kept me alive.
(Psalm 30:3)

Behold we die, we perish, we all perish.
(Numbers 17:12)

Shall we be consumed with dying?
(Numbers 17:13)

The righteous perisheth
And no man layeth it to heart:
|
And merciful men are taken away
(Isaiah 57:1)

By the blast of God they perish
|
and by the breath of his nostrils
|
are they consumed.
(Job 4:9)

How long, Lord? Wilt thou hide thyself forever?
Shall thy wrath burn like fire?
(Psalm 89:46)

Life?
Stay yourselves and wonder.
(Isaiah 29:1)

Stay yourselves and wonder.

Behold ye, regard, and wonder marvelously.
(Habakkuk 1:5)

Good tidings to the meek

Good tidings to the meek;
He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted;
to comfort all that mourn;
to give unto them beauty for ashes,
the oil of joy for mourning,
the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.
(Isaiah 61:1,2,3)

Behold ye, regard, and wonder marvelously.
(Habakkuk 1:5)

Why make ye this ado?

Acting as the “souls of the faithful,” Choir I begins the scene by asking the mourners more pointedly about the cause of their grief. The phrase, “Why make ye this ado and weep” is a parallel passage to the “Weep not” text in the first movement. In the account of Jesus healing Jairus’s daughter found in the gospel of Luke (used in Part I), Jesus commands the people to “weep not,” but in the gospel of Mark the statement is recorded as a question (“Why make ye this ado and weep?”). This text shift parallels the dramatic shift from introduction (Part I) to action (Part II); the question from Choir I begins a conversation between the two characters that can advance the story.

Choir II responds to the question with three statements concerning mortality drawn from the book of Job. The first is a general statement about the mortal nature of all men, but also hints at the brevity and harshness of life (“Man...is of few days”). Following that are two metaphorical versions of the same statement that reinforce man’s connection to earth: he is cut down like a flower and turns to dust. There is a hopeless feeling in these passages, showing that the mourners may doubt the value of life at all. Together, the statements have a sure message: all men have troubled lives, eventually die, and then return to the ground.

What man is he?

The next scene begins with a question from the mourners directed to the faithful, which in turn sparks a debate over immortality. This particular movement has more text than any other, containing the most complex segment of dialogue of the entire *Requiem*. The first six phrases (three per character) establish the first position of Choir I: there are some men who do not die. Choir II spent *Why make ye this ado?* claiming emphatically

that all men die, and here they put the question to Choir I: What man does not die? When Choir I questions their lack of faith in response,¹⁷⁵ the mourners for the first time turn the text towards themselves: “Behold *we* die, *we* perish” (italics mine). This statement and the next (“Shall we be consumed with dying?”) are a single text from the book of Numbers, originally the response of a group of rebellious Israelites after witnessing a sign from God rebuking them; their fear of death was immediate.¹⁷⁶ When Thompson placed these lines in the *Requiem* context, there is less fear of imminent death, but this is the first time that Choir II has directed the idea of death at their own lives, intensifying the debate by making it personal.

The alternate positions from Choir I emphasize faith in an everlasting God, which is the opposite focus of the finite man represented in the Choir II texts. Similar to his text assembly in “Lamentations,” Thompson showed biblical unity by taking the three phrases of faith and comfort from different sources: the first are words of Christ to the chosen disciples after he calmed the storm (“How is it that ye have no faith?”), the second are words of God quoted by the prophet Habakkuk to the chosen Israelites (“The just shall live by his faith”), and the third phrase is from Moses’ final blessing to the Israelites before he died (“The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms”). In all three instances, the quoted texts were directed at a people chosen by God, refuting the claim of universal mortality made by the mourners.

The debate then turns to the chosen people Choir I has identified as immortal. The mourners respond with two texts that they believe show the mortality of the righteous

¹⁷⁵ The published score quotes this passage as Mark 40:40, but the actual text is found at Mark 4:40.

¹⁷⁶ In the biblical context, the phrase “consumed with dying” is meant to represent simply “dying” rather than the possible reference to a psychological state of being “consumed with *the prospect of death*.”

(Isaiah 57:1, Job 4:9), and close with a plea directed to God (Psalm 89:46). While the previous section of text had a sense of dialogue, this portion is focused primarily on the mourners, delivering their position in the debate (“The righteous perisheth”). Instead of responding directly to the violent language of the mourners, Choir I repeats their refrain “Everlasting joy shall be unto them.” The intensity of the text heightens as Choir II turns to God and pleads for an end to His wrath (“How long, Lord... shall thy wrath burn like fire?”). This plea is Choir II’s final statement of argument, and in choosing this particular passage, Thompson brought their complete debate full-circle with a verse adjacent to their first text in the movement (Psalm 89:48, Psalm 89:46). Choir I has at this point been continually countering with a prophesy of “everlasting joy,” but now turns to answer Choir II directly: “His anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life.”¹⁷⁷

What follows is the portion of text that Thompson referred to as the “mystic demonstration of eternal life.”¹⁷⁸ In response to their “defeat” in the debate, Choir II gives the command “stay yourselves and wonder.” The literary voice of this text is ambiguous. Throughout the *Requiem*, Thompson chose not to rephrase any passages to make the dialogue consistent in terms of pronouns, tense, or voice. For example, the word “his” is used variously for God, people in general, or specific people. At this moment, it is unclear who Choir II is addressing when they say “stay yourselves and wonder.” If the command is addressed to Choir II, it would be more appropriate for Choir I to deliver it. Since Choir II delivers the command, it is possible that they are either speaking inwardly to themselves or reaching outward to command the audience or humankind in general.

¹⁷⁷ Psalm 30:5. The rest of verse five is not included in the *Requiem* text but previews the message of the rest of the *Requiem* text: “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

¹⁷⁸ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 33.

Extending the command to the audience was likely not Thompson's intent, though, based on his description of this scene. He referred to this as the "whispering of the awestruck mourners,"¹⁷⁹ which instead takes advantage of the fact that the individuals of the choir can speak inwardly to each other. Because Thompson did not modify the Biblical texts that he used, such issues do arise occasionally in the analysis.

The texts Thompson chose to demonstrate immortality support the idea of this message was for a special group of listeners. When Christ said, "Unto you is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God," he was explaining his use of parables to the disciples; they were meant to understand them, and others were not.¹⁸⁰ Choosing this text lends an impression of its audience receiving a special revelation. With the audience of mourners watching with amazement, the souls of the faithful address God directly, describing His saving work and their resulting immortality. Stunned and disproven, the mourners can only "murmur" to each other, "Behold ye, regard, and wonder marvelously."¹⁸¹ The text focus of "stay yourselves" is retained in this statement, so it can be interpreted as the individual mourners speaking to each other.

Good Tidings to the Meek

Though there was great drama in the debate on immortality, that was not the primary dramatic conflict of the *Requiem*. The goal of the faithful is to comfort the mourners, and now that they have convinced the mourners that eternal life exists, the

¹⁷⁹ Thompson, "Notes on a *Requiem*," 40.

¹⁸⁰ Mark 4:11, in its larger biblical context: "And when [Jesus] was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, 'Unto you is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive.'" Mark 4:10-12a (KJV)

¹⁸¹ Thompson, "Notes on a *Requiem*," 40.

faithful can offer them a path to comfort. Thompson does this with an entire movement of text devoted to Choir I, instructing the mourners how to be comforted.

To assemble this text, Thompson chose phrases from three verses of Isaiah 61. The passage is prophetic: the “me” referenced throughout the text is Jesus Christ and the “he” is God.¹⁸² The faithful instruct the mourners with the same words, saying that they are given “beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning,” and “the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” For the needs of the drama, this message needed to encourage the mourners to participate in a specific action, which Thompson expressed as the putting on of the “garment of praise.”¹⁸³ By requiring this action of the mourners for their comfort, the primary dramatic conflict of the *Requiem* is advanced.

The Triumph of Faith: Musical Setting

The text is divided into three larger sections, realized as distinct movements. In each, Thompson allowed the subject matter and mood of the dialogue to guide him in selecting his musical materials, and the result was three movements with different forms, tonal schemes, and degrees of text overlap. One common thread between the three was Thompson’s ability to adjust musical themes to fit different texts, so both the text and musical unity were preserved. With its constant dialogue, Part II is quite different in design than Part I, but again Thompson used his musical materials to maximize the dramatic effect of the text.

¹⁸² See Luke 4:16-21. In it, Jesus quotes this passage from the book of Isaiah in the synagogue and applies it to himself.

¹⁸³ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 41.

Why Make Ye This Ado?

As described in the text analysis, this movement is comprised of a question from Choir I and a series of three answers from Choir II. The question from Choir I is used as a frame, appearing both at the ends of the movement and in between each answer from Choir II. Thompson chose to keep the themes for the questions and answers consistent, so the resulting form is an alternation of the two, roughly ABABABA(Coda). Small musical adjustments to the successive theme appearances accommodate the text structure and provide variety, but Thompson continues to return to the same key—regardless of where a section ends tonally, the next begins centered on A.

In “Lamentations,” Thompson contrasted the characters of the two choirs by making their musical themes as different as possible. At the start of Part II, by contrast, they are both imitative. Thompson described the differences between the choirs’ writing as more subtle but no less genuine: “The music of both Choruses employs imitative writing but of opposite kinds: Chorus I, *fugato*, ascending in *stretto*, disjunct and *staccato*; Chorus II, *canonetto*, descending by fifths, conjunct and *legato*.”¹⁸⁴ Additional contrast is gained through mode, with Choir I beginning each of its questions in Phrygian followed by a response from Choir II in Aeolian.¹⁸⁵

All of the imitative themes are brief, so Thompson was able to use them to communicate a longer text in a short movement, even though imitative textures are often used to dwell on shorter texts. The Choir I theme sets its seven-syllable question with only eight notes over four beats (e.g. fig. 5.1, mm. 1-5). Each iteration involves an ascent of the theme in *stretto* followed by an imitative descent and cadence on the words “and

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 40.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 40.

Allegro (♩ = 88)

pp *leggerissimo, bisbigliando*

Why make ye this a -

pp *leggerissimo, bisbigliando*

Why make ye this a - do and

pp *leggerissimo, bisbigliando*

Why make ye this a - do and weep? —

pp *leggerissimo, bisbigliando*

Why make ye this a - do and weep? — Why

do and weep? — Why make ye this a -

weep? — Why make ye this a - do and

Why make ye this a - do and weep? —

make ye this a - do and weep? —

rall. *pp legato* 5

do and weep? — and weep?

rall. *pp legato*

weep? and weep? — and weep?

rall. *pp legato*

and weep? — and weep? —

rall. *pp legato*

and weep? — and weep?

Figure 5.1. *Why make ye this ado?*, measures 1-6.

weep.” The initial ascent involves two full cycles of stretto entrances, but due to the brevity of the theme that is accomplished in only two measures. The imitative descent portion that follows dwells on the descending half-step that colors the word “weep,” a text-painting device that was also used in “Lamentations.” The Phrygian mode provides the “weeping” half-step naturally in all tonic and dominant entrances of the ascending theme. This theme appears three times, and each repetition the descent portion is extended, which adds emphasis to the weeping and leads to cadences in various keys.

Choir II’s response phrases are also in two parts, but in the place of the *fugato* ascent that begins Choir I’s theme, Choir II has a declamatory passage (fig. 5.2). Though

The musical score for Figure 5.2 shows four staves representing different voice parts. The tempo is marked *a tempo, irato*. The lyrics are: "Man that is born of a wo - man is of few days and full of troub - le." The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 7-9, and the second system contains measures 10-11. The lyrics are: "Man that is born of a wo - man is of few days and full of troub - le." The score includes dynamic markings *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). The descending stepwise lines are staggered in a way that produces parallel thirds between adjacent voice parts.

Figure 5.2. *Why make ye this ado?*, measures 7-10. Descending stepwise lines are staggered in a way that produces parallel thirds between adjacent voice parts.

also centered on A, Choir II responds in Aeolian, contrasting with Choir I's Phrygian statements. Following the declamatory phrase is an imitative descent, and as Thompson pointed out, the imitative descent for this theme is not fugal, but rather a canon which produces scalar streams of descending thirds.

With careful adjustment of rhythms and some rearrangement of text, Thompson adapts this theme for three different phrases. The first halves of each of the phrases were lined up easily (each containing eight syllables), but more adjustment was needed for the descending canonic phrases. The first instance of the descending canon shows its basic form: four syllables followed by five. When Thompson approached the longer subordinate phrase in the second response, he simply repeated the pattern (4+5+4+5). The third time he repeated portions of the phrase to create a 4+4+5 series. A summary of the parallel rhythms that Thompson used is provided in figure 5.3.

		Syllables								
Phrases		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
	1a	Man	that	is	born	of	a	wo-	man	
	2a	He	com-	eth	forth	like	a	flow-	er	
	3a	All	flesh	shall	per-	ish	to-	ge-	ther	
	1b	1 Is	2 of	3 few	4 days	+	1 and	2 full	3 of	4 trou- ble
	2b	And As	is a	cut sha-	down dow		he and	fle- con	eth tin-u	al- eth so not
	3b	And Shall	man turn	shall a-	turn gain		a-	gain	un-to	dust_____

Figure 5.3. Prosody alignment among the three texts sung by Choir II in *Why make ye this ado?*

Figure 5.4. *Why make ye this ado?*, measures 21-22. Thompson set the extra phrase with an inverted form of the canon.

Figure 5.5. *Why make ye this ado?*, measures 30-31. Thompson balanced the extension in phrase 3a with an internal extension in 3b, identified here in brackets.

By reconciling all of the rhythmic differences, Thompson is able to use the same musical figures for the three responses with minor alterations. Phrases 1a and 2a are set identically, as are 1b and the first half of 2b. When Thompson continues the canon for the second half of phrase 2b, he allows the theme to descend through one more series and then rise back to finish (fig. 5.4). The setting of phrase 3a is intensified through heightened tessitura and an internal extension, and that process of extension is reflected phrase 3b for balance (fig. 5.5).

Thompson used several specific compositional devices to heighten the drama in this text. When the themes appeared for the second time, he extended each of the descending passages longer than the listener would expect, simultaneously resolving text differences and increasing musical tension. When Choir II responds for the third time, the

The image displays two musical excerpts. The top excerpt, 'Why make ye this ado?', consists of four staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with lyrics: 'do and weep? and weep? and weep?'. The music is marked 'rall.' and features descending passages. The bottom excerpt, 'Hor che'l ciel e la terra', also consists of four staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with lyrics: 'dust. dust. dust. dust.'. This music is also marked 'rall.' and features long, sustained notes. Both excerpts end with a 'segue' marking. Below these is a piano accompaniment for 'Hor che'l ciel e la terra' in 4/4 time, with lyrics: 'Hor che'l ciel e la terra e'l ven - to ta - ce'.

Figure 5.6. Why make ye this ado?, measures 37-38 and Monteverdi: *Hor che'l ciel e la terra*, measures 1-6 (reduced).

first half of their statement is higher, louder, and unexpectedly lengthened. The coda is an extended version of Choir I's theme, placed over pedal tones being held by Choir II.

Though the dynamic and tessitura decreases at the close of the movement, Thompson sought to give this ending a somber feeling with those pedal tones, which underscore Choir I in low minor thirds. He directly linked this invocation of darkness to the low thirds that begin Monteverdi's madrigal *Hor che'l ciel e la terra* (fig. 5.6).¹⁸⁶

What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?

The text for this movement is a debate between the two choirs that gradually gains intensity, followed by Choir I's "demonstration" of immortality. For unity, Thompson indicated that he did not adopt any particular form for the movement, and instead relied on motivic unity within and between the declamatory statements of each choir.¹⁸⁷ The movement can be divided into three broad sections: the initial debate about death itself (measures 1-30), the debate about the righteous (measures 31-81), and the demonstration

Allegro conciso (♩ = 100)

What man is he that liv-eth and shall not see death?

What man is he that liv-eth and shall not see death?

What man is he that liv-eth and shall not see death?

What man is he that liv-eth and shall not see death?

Figure 5.7. *What man is he?*, measures 1-7. The opening statements of Choirs I and II in the "debate," showing great musical contrast reflective of their texts.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 40.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 40.

Chorus I Lento tranquillo ($\text{♩} = 50$)

ppp 5

How is it that ye have no faith?

ppp

How is it that ye have no faith?

ppp

8 How is it that ye have — no faith?

ppp

How is it that ye have no faith?

Figure 5.7. (continued).

Chorus I Lento tranquillo ($\text{♩} = 50$)

ppp 15

The just shall live by faith.

pp sentito *p*

The just shall live by faith.

ppp

8 The just shall live by faith.

ppp

The just shall live by his faith.

Figure 5.8. *What man is he?*, measures 12-15. Harmonic inversion of measures 4-7 (Fig. 5.7)

of life (82-104).

The mourners' initial question begins the debate and displays the general style that Thompson used for their statements (fig. 5.7). High voices and low voices sing melodies that are approximate inversions of each other (S/T and A/B paired at the octave). Though also in a chordal style, this contrasts significantly with the Choir I statements, which are built with functional progressions and note values of double or quadruple length (fig. 5.7, mm. 4-7). This dichotomy of modal versus functional homophony for the two choirs is similar to the writing differences in "Lamentations." In

addition, the two themes have roughly opposite dynamics; differing articulations; Choir II has a modulating theme, while Choir I's theme is tonally closed; and the same pulse, but contrasting tempo markings (*Allegro conciso* versus *Lento tranquillo*). Though the pulse remains constant, Thompson used much shorter note values for Choir II, so the affect created is contrasting. These many musical contrasts enhance their opposite positions in the debate: Choir II is unsettled, intense, and singing in a less-sophisticated style, preaching a message of panic; while Choir I responds with quiet serenity, clear structure, and a message of peace.

The first two pairs of statements display these contrasting styles; the first two statements of Choir I are actually harmonic inversions of each other with voices exchanged (fig. 5.8).¹⁸⁸ The third pair of statements retains the general style (“Shall we be consumed with dying?” and “The eternal God is thy refuge...”), but also introduce two more themes that will recur throughout the movement. “Shall we be consumed with dying?” receives the first new motive, which consists of falling parallel triads in the lower three voices below a disjunct sequence in the soprano (fig. 5.9). This theme is used both to paint negative phrases, and as a melisma on words associated with death, as summarized in Table 5.1. Like the earlier Choir II theme, this death motive modulates upward, supporting the notion of instability and increasing dramatic tension.

Table 5.1. Use of the death motive in *What man is he?*

Measures	Text	Initial triad	Cadence
18-20	“Shall we be consumed with dying?”	B major	D-sharp major
33-34	“no man layeth it to heart”	A minor	A-sharp major
38-39	“merciful men are taken away”	B-flat major	B major
47-48	“consumed”	G major	A (open)
64-65	“fire”	F minor	incomplete

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 41. Thompson identified this voice exchange in his essay.

Figure 5.9 shows a musical score for measures 18-20. It consists of four vocal staves on the left and a piano accompaniment on the right. The vocal parts are marked with *ff* (fortissimo) and *rall.* (rallentando). The piano part is marked with *rall.* and *p* (piano). The lyrics are: "sum'd, shall we be con - sum'd with dy - ing?". The piano part includes a bracketed section labeled "Chorus II" and a measure marked "20".

Figure 5.9. *What man is he?*, measures 18-20, the death motive in brackets.

Figure 5.10 shows a musical score for measures 67-71. It consists of four vocal staves on the left and a piano accompaniment on the right. The vocal parts are marked with *f* (forte) and *dim.* (diminuendo). The piano part is marked with *p* (piano). The lyrics are: "shall howl for vex - a - tion of spir - it.". The piano part includes a bracketed section labeled "Chorus II" and a measure marked "20".

Figure 5.10. *The Peaceable Kingdom: Say ye to the righteous*, measures 67-71.



Figure 5.11. *The Peaceable Kingdom*: “Howl ye,” measures 52-55.

This death theme was a self-quotation—Thompson had used it as a unifying motive in *The Peaceable Kingdom* for similar texts. In the first movement of *The Peaceable Kingdom*, Thompson used a similar theme to paint the words “howl for vexation,” and though the direction of the parallel motion is changed slightly, the general pattern is the same (fig. 5.10). Measures 52-55 of “Howl ye” (movt. 4) are an even clearer source, used for the word “howl” (fig. 5.11). The most obvious adaptation that Thompson made to use these “howling” themes for “death” in the *Requiem* was to move the disjunct vocal line from the bass to the soprano, but the essential features are the same.

Choir II offered a musical theme to depict “death” for its third statement in the debate, and Choir I’s response to it also adds new musical material. On their text “The eternal God is thy refuge,” Choir I offers their own theme in two parts. The first part, or eternal God theme, its distinct sound produced by the the minor third above and major

Lento tranquillo
ppp

S. The e - ter - nal God is thy re - fuge and un - der - neath are the
A. The e - ter - nal God is thy re - fuge and un - der - neath are the
T. The e - ter - nal God is thy re - fuge and un - der - neath are the
B. The e - ter - nal God is thy re - fuge and un - der - neath are the

senza cresc.

S. ev - - - - er - last - - ing arms.
A. ev - - - - er - last - - ing arms.
T. ev - - - - er - last - - ing arms.
B. ev - - - - er - last - - ing arms.

Figure 5.12. *What man is he?*, Choir I, measures 21-30. The first appearance of the eternal God (m. 21-6) and life (m. 27-30) motives.

second below the starting pitch (fig. 5.12, mm. 21-26). The second half is a life motive, which is a modified death motive setting the word “everlasting” (fig. 5.12, mm. 27-30).

Choir II had first sung their death motive only six measures earlier, but Choir I immediately changes the music and the message. Thompson transformed the death motive into life with three changes: 1) he softened the affect by doubling note values, softening articulations, and reducing dynamics; 2) he moved the disjunct line from the soprano to the bass, smoothing out the overall texture; and 3) he added an internal extension (fig. 5.12 m. 27, beats 3 and 4) that both made the motive rise rather than fall, and made it tonally closed instead of modulating. Up to this point in the *Requiem*, Choirs I and II shared no musical material, so from a dramatic standpoint, this contrasting

treatment of the same theme establishes some common ground for the two characters for the first time.

Though Thompson said that there was no unifying motive in the *Requiem* as a whole,¹⁸⁹ he did employ the eternal God and life themes several more times in the rest of the work, and will be indicated as they appear in the course of the analysis. The introduction of the death theme and its counterpart ends the initial debate on death; the next discussion is the fate of the righteous.

In the second section of *What man is he?*, the rhetoric of Choir II intensifies with each phrase while Choir I repeats “Everlasting joy shall be unto them.” The statements of Choir II retain the general style of the previous section, using both the inverted pairs of voices and death motives. Dramatically, Choir I begins to approach Choir II in their own world. The first statements of “Everlasting joy” are no longer in the half-speed *lento* of before, but are instead accelerated to quarter note = 88. Thompson compounded this

Meno mosso (♩ = 88)

P dolcissimo

E - ver - last - ing joy _____ shall _____ be un - to them.

P dolcissimo

E - ver - last - ing joy _____ shall _____ be un - to them.

P dolcissimo

E - ver - last - ing joy _____ shall _____ be un - to them.

P dolcissimo

E - ver - last - ing joy _____ shall _____ be un - to them.

Figure 5.13. *What man is he?*, Choir I, measures 35-37. Soprano and bass lines are inversions of each other, while tenor and alto are in parallel motion.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 33.

effect by having Choir I join in the brisk-tempo style of Choir II, with similar inversions between voices (fig. 5.13). The distinct tempos of the two choirs move gradually closer until they converge in measure 43.

Dramatic tension begins to build in measure 48, when Choir I begins to continuously chant their “Everlasting joy” over the emphatic questions of “How long, Lord?” from Choir II (fig. 5.14). Thompson intensified the questioning from Choir II by pairing the voices in unison octaves, and then offsetting their entrances to make their pleas more persistent. In each case, Choir II’s plea consists of the fifth and minor seventh

The musical score for measures 48-50 of "What man is he?" is presented in two systems. Each system contains four staves, representing two parts for each of two choirs. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. Measure numbers 48, 49, and 50 are indicated at the top of the first system. Dynamic markings include *(f)* and *50*. The lyrics for Choir I are "Ev - er - last - ing joy," and for Choir II are "How long, Lord?".

Figure 5.14. *What man is he?*, measures 48-50.

Figure 5.15. *What man is he?*, Choir II, measures 64-67.

of the triad being sung by Choir I, one of the first of many references to the Mixolydian mode found in the *Requiem*. The intensification continues through A major, B major, and finally A-flat major, until the mourners end their side of the debate with a modified death motive (on the word “fire”) ending with a striking open fifth C-G in measure 67 (fig. 5.15).¹⁹⁰

Thompson’s use of tonality here is notable. He begins the “eternal life” motive in C major, an extension of the open fifth left by Choir II, and modulated to F major to begin the life motive. That motive raises tonal focus a minor third every measure. Here it is extended an extra measure (m. 75), resulting in A-flat major, which Thompson eventually led to E-flat major for the final cadence of this section.

If the message of this text is taken as mortals being transformed to be more like God, the journey from C to E-flat is not without precedent—Johannes Brahms used the same two keys to represent Humankind and God in *Schicksalslied* and *Ein deutsches*

¹⁹⁰ In *The Peaceable Kingdom*, Thompson closed a similar climax with open fifths, immediately before the most climactic chorus, “Howl ye.”

Requiem.¹⁹¹ On an even larger tonal scale, this cadence on E-flat major is the end of a larger journey from the A-Aeolian that dominated the previous movement and began the current one. The shift from a minor key to a major key (a tritone away) represents a triumph of the righteous, and also has musical precedent. When the focus shifts from the wicked to the righteous in *The Peaceable Kingdom* between *The paper reeds by the brooks* and *But these are they that forsake the Lord*, Thompson replaced E minor with B-flat major.

The final cadence of this section shows Choir II relenting, asking about the life spoken of by the “souls of the faithful,” and ultimately adopting both their tempo and dynamic in the final chord. Thompson voiced the final chord symbolically: when the mourners join and fill out the E-flat-major chord, they do so by singing chord tones

Lento (♩ = 50)

His ang - er en - dur'th but a mo - ment; in His fa - vour is

His ang - er en - dur'th but a mo - ment; in His fa - vour is

His ang - er en - dur'th but a mo - ment; in His fa - vour is

His ang - er en - dur'th but a mo - ment; in His fa - vour is

Figure 5.16. *What man is he?*, measures 68-81.

¹⁹¹ In *Schicksalslied*, Brahms set a poem by Friedrich Hölderlin, in which the first two strophes deal with the “divine,” written in E-flat major; and the last strophe deals with things “human,” written in C minor (ending in C major). John Daverio also compared the *Schicksalslied* tonality shift to the one between movements V and VI of *Ein deutsches Requiem* (E-flat major to C minor). John Daverio, “The ‘Wechsel der Töne’ in Brahms’s “*Schicksalslied*,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 84-113.

poco accel. e cresc. 75 *f* *poco rall. e dim.*

life, _____

poco accel. e cresc. *f* *poco rall. e dim.*

life, _____ in _____ His

poco accel. e cresc. *f* *poco rall. e dim.*

8 life, _____ in _____ His

poco accel. e cresc. *f* *poco rall. e dim.*

life, _____ in His

a tempo (♩ = 50) *pp* 80 *ppp*

_____ is life, _____ is life, _____

a tempo *pp* *ppp*

fa - vour is life, _____ is life, _____

a tempo *pp* *ppp*

8 fa - vour is life, _____ is life, _____

a tempo *pp* *ppp*

fa - vour's life, _____ is life, _____

a tempo (♩ = 50) *ff* 80 *ppp*

Life? Life? Life? _____

a tempo *ff* *ppp*

Life? Life? Life? _____

a tempo *ff* *ppp*

8 Life? Life? Life? _____

a tempo *ff* *(divisi) ppp*

Life? Life? Life? _____

Figure 5.16. (continued)

directly beneath their corresponding voice parts in Choir I, so that the souls appear to “float” over the mortals. This same symbolic technique is employed both at the end of Part I and Part V.¹⁹²

The movement closes with the “mystic demonstration of eternal life,”¹⁹³ in which the souls of the faithful speak to God while the mourners look on stunned and amazed. For the whispering mourners, Thompson uses a single melodic theme for both “Stay yourselves and wonder” and their closing reaction, “Behold ye, regard, and wonder marvelously.” Perhaps as a signal of their having been partially convinced, the mourners’ theme is an adaptation of the eternal God melody, using both the minor third above and the major second below a central pitch (fig. 5.17). To invoke the image of whispering amongst the mourners, Thompson set these brief statements with imitative entrances only a beat apart, so the voices anxiously talk over each other. “Behold ye...” is a less fearful statement, so the anxious whispering is traded for awestruck serenity painted in steady parallel homophony.¹⁹⁴

The two statements of Choir I that constitute the “mystic demonstration” also begin with variants of the eternal God motive. First, they use the motive in a unison statement to the mourners, and then in its pure form at “Thou hast brought up my soul” (fig. 5.18). When Choir I follows that with “Thou hast kept me alive” (m. 100), they sing the life motive again with the extension that lifts the tonal center a minor third.

¹⁹² Ibid., 47-48.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 40.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 40. Thompson used the terms “whisper” and “awestruck” to describe these two specific lines of music in his “Notes on a *Requiem*.”

Original: S I, m. 21-23

The e - ter - nal God is thy re - fuge

B II, m. 83 (occurs in all Choir II voice parts)

Stay your-selves and won- der. Stay your-selves and won- der.

Choir I, unison, m. 86-88

mys - ter - y of the king - dom of God.

S I, m. 91-95

O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul

Choir II, m. 106-8

Be-hold ye, re - gard, and won - der mar-vel-ous - ly.

Figure 5.17. Variants of the eternal God melody in measures 82-84.

Good tidings to the meek

The preceding movement exhibited several unifying motivic features, but relied primarily on the text rather than formal elements for its drama. For the song of comfort, calling the mourners to praise, Thompson specifically chose a clearer and more simple form, in this case, a three-part song form.¹⁹⁵ The text is a message from the faithful to the

¹⁹⁵ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 41. “After the amorphous form of the preceding movement, a more definite shape seemed called for.”

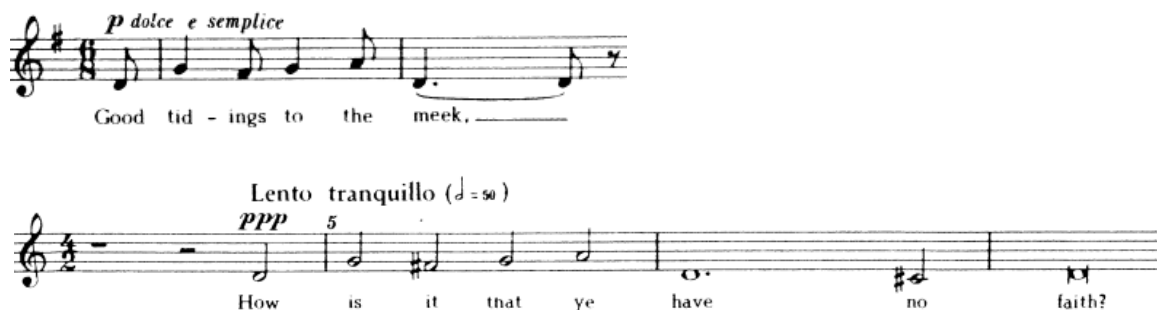


Figure 5.18. *Good tidings to the meek*, A. I, measures 1-2. Variant of melody in *What man is he?*, S. I, measures 4-7.

mourners, so Choir I sings alone for all but the final phrase, where Choir II gives another awestruck response. Though its meaning is enhanced by its context, the rounded form allows the movement stand on its own; consequently, it is the only portion of Parts I-III that was published as an extracted piece.

The musical setting is a direct contrast to the music of Choir II in “Lamentations.” This is the first time since the opening movement that Thompson employed a compound meter, but this movement has an entirely different affect.¹⁹⁶ For the melody, Thompson drew on the first Choir I theme of the previous movement, varying the rhythm to give it a dance-like quality (fig. 5.18).

Setting a text replete with iambic rhythms (weak-strong) in a compound meter produced alternating notes of short and long duration. This rocking feeling is especially prevalent in the opening parts of the first three large phrases, whose rhythms are aligned thus in their musical settings:

Good ti- dings to the meek.
[He] hath sent me to bind up
To com- fort all that mourn

¹⁹⁶ When Thompson revised tempos between the manuscript and published score, he increased the tempo of both this movement and “Lamentations” from 50 to 60.

Poco andante (♩ = 60)

p dolce e semplice

SOPRANO
Good tid - ings to the

ALTO
p dolce e semplice
Good tid - ings to the meek, _____ good tid - ings to _____ the

TENOR
p dolce e semplice
Good tid - ings to the meek, _____ good tid - ings to _____ the

BASS
p dolce e semplice
Good tid - ings to the meek, _____

5

meek, _____ good tid - - - ings, good tid - - -

meek, _____ good tid - - - ings, _____ good tid - - -

p dolcissimo
meek, _____ good tid - ings, good tid - ings, good

good tid - ings, good tid - ings, good tid -

10

- ings, good tid - - - ings _____ to _____ the

ings, _____ good tid - - - ings to _____ the

8 tid - ings, good tid - ings, good tid - ings _____ to _____ the

ings good tid - ings, good tid - - - ings _____ to _____ the

Figure 5.19. *Good tidings to the meek*, measures 1-11.

Two other musical features that directly contrast with the first movement are the presence of dotted rhythms, and the management of descending lines, both of which are illustrated in figure 5.19. In measures 2 and 4, the inner voices frequently have dotted rhythms, which provide a lilt not present in “Lamentations.” Measures 5-9 show a staggered stepwise descent in all voices, a feature that typified “mourning” in Part I. Here the descent has an entirely different affect, due to the upward leaps that precede each descending pitch, and the use of neighbor tones to approach the new pitch from below (e.g. fig. 5.19, soprano, m. 5 into 6).

Several other musical features help paint the specific words, such as appoggiaturas for the words “mourning” and “broken-hearted,” and the sudden return of a major key on the text “Beauty for ashes.” The central portion of the text for this movement is the “garment of praise,” which comes at the very end. Thompson emphasized its setting with a return of the original key and the loudest dynamic in the movement at measure 55 (fig. 5.20). The contrasting phrases in the text allowed Thompson to let the music gradually diminish from this high point as it is “pulled down” by the “spirit of heaviness.” Beneath the final chord, Choir II returns with their expression of amazement, but this second time Thompson deepened the feeling by marking it with both a slower tempo and *molto sostenuto e solenne* (very sustained and solemn).

the gar - ment of praise, _____ the

gar - ment of praise, _____ the gar - ment of praise, _____ the

gar - ment of praise, _____ the gar - ment of praise, _____ the

gar - ment of praise, _____ the

55

f — *ff* — *f* — *f* —

gar - ment of praise, — the gar-ment of praise for the

f *cresc.* — *ff* — *f* —

gar - ment of praise, — the gar-ment of praise for the spi - rit —

f *cresc.* — *ff* — *f* — *ff* — *f* —

8 — the gar-ment of praise, — the gar - ment of praise — for — the

f *cresc.* — *ff* — *f* —

gar - ment of praise, — the gar-ment of praise for the spi - rit — of

60

dim. *mf* *mp* *poco a poco rall.* *p*

spir - it of heav - i - ness, of heav - i - ness, the

dim. *mf* *mp* *poco a poco rall.* *p*

— of heav - i - ness, of heav - i - ness, the

dim. *mf* *mp* *poco a poco rall.* *p*

spir - it of heav - i - ness, heav - i - ness, the

dim. *mf* *mp* *poco a poco rall.* *p*

heav - i - ness of heav - i - ness,

Figure 5.20. *Good tidings to the meek*, measures 51-69.

Meno mosso

65 *calando*

gar - ment of praise for the spir - it of heav - i -

gar - ment of praise for the spir - it of heav - i - ness.

gar - ment of praise for the spir - it of heav - i -

p spir - it of heav - i -

Molto sostenuto

Chorus I

pp

ness.

ness.

ness.

ness.

Molto sostenuto e solenne

Chorus II

pp

p

Be - hold ye, re - gard, and won - der mar - vel - ous - ly.

Be - hold ye, re - gard, and won - der mar - vel - ous - ly.

Be - hold ye, re - gard, and won - der mar - vel - ous - ly.

Be - hold ye, re - gard, and wou - der mar - vel - ous - ly.

Figure 5.20. (continued)

The Triumph of Faith: Performance Considerations

Overall

In “Lamentations,” the dramatic plot was advanced through careful attention to the dynamics and articulations Thompson used to vary the repetitions of the musical themes, without adding any text. In Part II, very little of the text is repeated, so attention to the intent of each individual line of text drives the dramatic effect. The unity between text and music that Thompson achieved in Part II helps to produce the characters that the singers must exhibit.

It is helpful to remember the progression of emotions through these three movements. The first begins with a prying question from Choir I, to which Choir II responds with intensity. This debate continues with traded phrases of opposite moods in the second movement, and both choirs increase in their intensity. At the conclusion of the debate, Choir I has triumphed and enters into its most serious and solemn moment. Choir II, meanwhile, is full of awe at what they see, and then listen intently as Choir I sings a song of comfort.

This description helps in comparing the relative intensities of the three movements. Within the three movements in Part II, the climax should come at the end of the long build of intensity in *What man is he?* (m. 67). For greatest dramatic effect, the *pianississimo* from Choir I in measure 68 should be as soft as the previous measures were loud. All three movements have *fortissimo* markings at some point, but they should be realized as different volume levels based on the drama. Dynamic pacing is important for preparing Part II, otherwise the long choral dialogue can turn into simply alternations of *fortissimo* and *p*, with little variation between the two.

The last overall consideration is that of pitch. As in “Lamentations,” Thompson often passed entry pitches between choirs in Part II, but there are some exposed moments that are prone to mistakes in pitch. Each transition between the choirs is an opportunity to miss an entry pitch given, and at least a dozen such transitions in Part II involve no shared pitches between the choirs. Over the span of twelve minutes, pitch mistakes can compound to unusual proportion, as they did in the Harvard performance in 1959.¹⁹⁷ An incorrect transition in the fourth measure of *Why make ye this ado and weep?* left the choir a half-step below pitch flat for the remainder of that movement, which was in turn passed to *What man is he?*, where Choir I lost another half-step in each of two of the slowest, softest passages. When *Good tidings to the meek* began, it took several measures for the choir to settle into a key—if they had been rehearsing at the written pitch, they were entering the movement a minor third lower than rehearsed. If rehearsal reveals similar difficulties, quickly re-establishing pitch after every movement would be necessary.

Why make ye this ado?

Randall Thompson specifically brought up the differences between the styles of imitative writing used for the choirs, so those features should be emphasized.¹⁹⁸ The most obvious feature from a performance perspective is the articulation differences. The descending passages for Choir I are staccato and for Choir II, *legato*, but their similarities in shape will make them seem the same to an audience unless these articulations are obvious. Thompson also meticulously indicated *tenuto* on specific syllables in all of the

¹⁹⁷ Randall Thompson, *Requiem*, Harvard Glee Club and Radcliffe Choral Society, dir. Elliot Forbes, Technicord T15-16, 1959.

¹⁹⁸ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 40.

imitative passages, to encourage singers to place weight on the appropriate syllables regardless of where they fall in the measure (fig. 5.21). In general, these *tenuto* markings provide singers with an important phrasing direction, encouraging them to keep some forward motion to the end of the phrase. The imitative theme on “Why make ye this ado and weep?” is meant to be atmospheric, indicated by the word *bisbigliando*,¹⁹⁹ and this feeling is difficult to produce if the eighth-note pulses predominate sonically.

The declamatory theme of Choir II must have intensity but not be too loud. Thompson provided several crescendo markings to help give shape to the lines. Intensity is meant to increase in Choir II over the course of this and the next movement, so these first statements, marked only *forte*, must not be too loud. The sudden increase in dynamics will provide enough contrast to make extreme dynamics unnecessary. Enunciation of consonants is very important in these passages, as the text is delivered quickly and does not repeat; a line like “All flesh shall perish together,” sung briskly, is the most susceptible to misunderstanding. As for the descending fugal themes, a *legato* articulation is called for but must not limit intelligibility of the text or slow down the tempo.

The most significant challenge of this movement is maintaining pitch. This difficulty has several factors, the first of which is the passing of entry pitches between the choirs. All major sections of this movement except one (m. 24) begin in either A-Aeolian



Figure 5.21. *Why make ye this ado?*, B. I, measure 1, articulation indications.

¹⁹⁹ Italian for “whispering.” Also refers to a tremolo effect produced on a harp by quickly brushing hands back and forth along the strings.

or A-Phrygian, and the preceding material is often of little help. Figure 5.22 shows the transition from Choir II to Choir I in measure 10. The mode is preserved, but the basses of Choir II have to cue off of a sparsely-textured falling canon with a that ends on the second scale degree. This is not prohibitively difficult for the types of choirs who would generally perform this piece, but this type of entry—an imitative texture cueing off of another sparse imitative texture—will require significant rehearsal, particularly when there are many such transitions in a single movement.

Another significant pitch challenge comes in the form of the descending imitative figures for both choirs. The Harvard choir's flattening of this movement began with an incorrect transition between one of the voice parts in the sequence, which was in turn passed down to the other parts. Repeated rehearsal of such passages at multiple speeds will be required for them to become second-nature. Of particular challenge to Choir I are the various cadences that close their statements, all of which enter after a pause (fig. 5.23). Similar repetition will be necessary to ensure the accuracy of those chords.

The image displays a musical score for two choirs, Choir II and Choir I, across four staves. The music is in 4/4 time. Choir II's part is written on the first three staves (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor), and Choir I's part is on the fourth staff (Bass). The lyrics are: "days and full of trou-ble. of few days and full of trou-ble. Why is of few days and full of trou-ble. Why make ye this a is of few days and full of trou-ble. Why make ye this a-do and". The score shows a transition from Choir II to Choir I in measure 10, where Choir II has a sparse, falling canon and Choir I enters with a descending imitative figure.

Figure 5.22. *Why make ye this ado?*, measures 9-11.

The musical score for 'Why make ye this ado?', measures 3-5, is written for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The lyrics are 'do and weep?_ and weep?_ and weep?_ and weep?_'. The tempo markings are 'rall.' and 'pp legato'. A fermata is present over the final note of the Soprano part.

Figure 5.23. *Why make ye this ado?*, measures 3-5.

What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?

This movement contains more complex action and exchanges more dialogue than any other single movement of the *Requiem*. Contrast between the characters of Choir I and Choir II is vital, but also the shifts in moods that both choirs need to exhibit.

For Choir I, intense *pianississimo* dynamics are needed in all of their opening statements. The same resolve and intensity that filled their tone quality in “Lamentations” must be here also, but in a lesser dynamic. Keeping the intensity is vital, the absence of which resulted in by flatting of a half-step in two separate instances during the full premiere performance: no intonation errors were made in transitions; rather, all of the flatting happened during the slow, soft phrases of Choir I. A concept that will help is thinking through the long chords with an unending series of quarter and eighth-note pulses. For a contrast in mood and interpretation, Thompson notated these opening sections in the same tempo with a different level of beat, but the underlying pulse never changes. Rehearsing with eighth-note pulsing and no text can help secure the required feeling of forward motion.

The opening statements of Choir II are opposite in feeling. The challenge will be to sing with appropriate separation and volume while still maintaining correct text stress and overall phrase shape, which Thompson notated precisely using accents and decrescendos (fig. 5.24). Another challenge comes in the death motives, all of which decrescendo during their cadences. Singers will need to continue to use ample air to support those endings to ensure the pitches they hand to Choir I are accurate.

During the next section, Choir II can maintain the same declamatory mood as they increase in volume, but Choir I must change slightly as they begin to sing “Everlasting joy.” As they take on the same volume, tempo, and musical shape of Choir II, they must be careful not to adopt their tone as well, since Thompson has marked this entire section *dolcissimo* to preserve their feeling of peacefulness. By measure 44, all parts are marked *fortissimo*, but this should be tempered for vocal endurance and to allow for the crescendo leading up to measure 67, or the effect of the climax will be lessened. Following the climax at measure 67, Choir I should reenter with their softest and most intense tone yet, swell to a full *forte* in measure 76, and control their diminuendo back to

Come prima (♩ = 100)

Be - hold we die, we per - ish, we all per - ish.

Figure 5.23. *What man is he?*, measures 8-11.

Be - hold we die, we per - ish, we all per - ish.

Figure 5.24. *What man is he?*, measures 8-11.

pianississimo without losing any pitch or intensity. Dramatically, this moment is the most challenging. For Choir II, their statements of “Life?” underneath Choir I are difficult to execute dramatically. Projecting this word as a question will rely on the faces of the singers to be communicated, since there is no way to sonically convey the inflection of a question with a single pitch. In fact, body language and facial expression will be essential tools for framing this entire preceding debate, as Choir I exudes optimism and Choir II, despair.

The drama of the “mystic demonstration” could be enhanced a series of carefully planned changes of focus. While glances between choirs could be planned earlier, they are not as essential to the dialogue as they are here. Choir II must play the role of a whispering crowd of mourners watching in amazement. At measure 82, they talk to each other, “Stay yourselves and wonder,” and then are spoken to directly by Choir I in unison, whom they should watch anxiously. Choir I should turn to deliver their prophetic words “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God,” followed by more inward whispering from Choir II. When the souls then address God directly, their focus should shift upward, away from the on-looking mourners, whose focus should remain on the spectacle of Choir I and remain there as they murmur “Behold ye, regard, and wonder marvelously” with a round, solemn tone opposite that of the preceding two movements.

Good tidings to the meek

With a simpler form and little plot development, this movement is more straightforward in its interpretation. The faithful are reassuring the mourners and then encouraging them to put on “the garment of praise.”

Because this movement is in many ways a contrast to the Choir II music from Part I, “Lamentations,” the differences between them should be emphasized. The occasional lilting dotted rhythms should come out of the texture slightly, the leaps and lower neighbors should boldly aid the stepwise chords in the second theme, and the tone color should generally be brighter and more buoyant in reflection of the more positive text.

Good text declamation is always important but here it is also aided by Thompson’s careful alignment of strong beats with accented syllables. The assigned tempo, identical to “Lamentations,” is appropriate and should be observed for the same reasons given previously. At tempos slower than dotted-quarter = 60, and the large beats begin to lose precedence and forward motion is slowed. To guard against that, singers can be encouraged to take advantage of the iambic feeling (weak-strong), and crescendo through weak syllables in order to lead towards and connect them to the strong beats. This technique will not only preserve the dance-like sway of the compound meter, it will improve the intelligibility of the text by retaining a steady flow of the poetic phrases.

The greatest interpretive challenge in this movement lies in the text. “The garment of praise” is the most important line of text because after the words of comfort, Choir I’s invitation to put on the garment is the text that propels the plot forward. The difficulty arises in the fact that in the text, the “garment of praise” is the third in a series of items that Choir I has been sent “to give unto them.” By the time the text “the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” is reached in the music, it has been fifteen measures and two phrases since “to give unto them” was last sung, and thus “the garment” can feel like an incomplete stub of text with no subject. To draw attention to the series, Thompson starts each of the three phrases with the same dynamic and music, only in different keys.

Figure 5.25. *Good tidings to the meek*, measures 35-38.

Linking all of the ideas together in performance will be difficult, but to achieve the greatest connection, choirs will need to be sure that the connection between the initial series is clear: “to give unto them beauty for ashes.” A good way ensure that connection is to suppress breath pauses that might break the continuity of measures 35-37, singing through “them,” connecting the [m] directly to [bjʊ] (fig. 5.24), which is possible in all but the tenor part.

Summary

Part II, “The Triumph of Faith,” contains the most complex passages of drama in the entire *Requiem*. This complexity is found primarily lengthy period of dialogue that comprises the debate on immortality. Choir I, representing the “souls of the faithful,” continually delivers a message of faith and peace in response to the violent rhetoric of the “mourners” in Choir II. In the end, the mourners are convinced that eternal life is possible, and the faithful tell them to put on “the garment of praise” in order to be comforted.

In contrast to “Lamentations,” Thompson seldom repeated text in Part II, owing to the large amount of it. The amount of text forced Thompson to draw different lines of

text together in similar musical themes, by which he showed an excellent balance between strict text-painting and preserving larger musical form. Thompson related the rhythms and affects of words and phrases to each other musically through the use of motives and sequence. Thompson even used particular keys, modes, and quotes from other works to symbolically paint the texts of the debate.

From a performance standpoint, Part II is dramatically difficult, containing the most “action” of any of the other movements. Choir II has the more difficult vocal task overall—its singers explore every dynamic and several emotions as they are defeated in the debate, and subsequently stand awestruck by the immortality of the faithful. Choir I also has musical challenges in singing with intensity at very soft dynamics, retaining their peaceful quality as their dynamic increases, and in accurately contrasting *Good tidings to the meek* with “Lamentations.” Thompson consistently supported the dramatic momentum of the text with his musical setting and gave performance indication that augment the effect.

Chapter 6: Part III, “The Call to Song”

The Call to Song: The Text

“The Triumph of Faith” ended with the faithful telling the mourners that their grief will be assuaged by putting on the “garment of praise.” In “The Call to Song,” Choir I implores Choir II to do just that with a series of choruses that beg the mourners to sing. After hearing several petitions of increasing intensity, Choir II can resist no longer and bursts into song, thus beginning the resolution of the principle conflict in the drama: the mourners finding comfort. As obliged by this story line, Choir II remains silent for three full choruses, as shown in the libretto below.

 III: The Call to Song
*Be filled with the spirit*Choir IChoir II

Be filled with the spirit,
singing and making melody
in your heart to the Lord.
(Ephesians 5:18, 19)

None answered.
(Judges 19:28)

Be filled with the spirit,
singing and making melody
in your heart to the Lord

But none answered.

Be filled with the spirit,
singing and making melody
in your heart to the Lord.

None giveth answer.
(Job 35:12)

O let the nations be glad

O let the nations be glad and sing for joy.
(Psalm 67:4)

But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear.
(Jeremiah 7:24)

Sing unto Him

Sing unto him.
Talk ye of all his wondrous works.
(I Chronicles 16:9)

Utter a Song

Utter a song...
(Judges 5:12)

Can I hear any more the voice
of singing men and singing women?
(2 Samuel 19:35)

Blessed be the Lord God,
Who only doeth wondrous things.
(Psalm 72:18)

Be filled with the spirit

The text Thompson chose for Choir I's initial petition is a gentle one, drawn from Paul's letter to the Ephesians. It appears adjacent to the text that begins Part V, "Walk as children of light." Rather than demanding an outward song of any sort, Choir I asks the mourners to use not only their voices, but also their hearts; in doing so, the praise which leads to comfort will result naturally. This entreaty speaks directly to the mourners, neither abstractly nor in generalized, detached terms.

The two phrases establish a relationship between the act of "being filled with the spirit" and "singing." Not only is this specific phrase ideal for the dramatic message, it is also well-suited to a melodic setting due to its symmetrical syllabic structure (6+8+6).

The “souls of the faithful” make this plea three times, and each time are answered with silence. Thompson used two passages for these interludes, each one lengthened slightly for emphasis: “None answered” (three syllables), “But none answered” (four syllables), and “None giveth answer” (five syllables). Though this increase in text intensity is subtle, it is further enhanced by a shift in tense from past “answered” to present, “giveth answer.” This is one example of Thompson placing phrases in an entirely different context than how they appear in scripture: the text “But none answered,” from the book of Judges, occurs after a man asked his concubine to get up, not knowing she was dead; and “none giveth answer” is from the book of Job, speaking of God’s silence towards rebellious people.

O let the nations be glad

After making clear to the mourners what they should do by addressing them directly, Choir I delivers their next plea in a more general sense. This is a brief text, but its complementary phrases reveal another relationship like the previous movement (filled spirit-singing), in this case linking the activity of “being glad” to “singing.” The subject of this command is “the nations,” so it is not necessarily directed at Choir II alone.

Following this text of praise, Thompson included a phrase that again reflects on the mourners’ reaction to the “call to song.” This text is drawn from the book of Jeremiah, describing the reaction of Israel to God’s demand for obedience. Again, the text is in past tense, which makes it dramatically ambiguous. Similar to the text conflict for Choir II at the end of *What man is he?*, there are two possible interpretations of these past tense phrases. Choir I can either deliver them to the audience as a narrator informing them of what has happened, or they can ignore the tense incongruity and speak it as a

reflection amongst themselves. Unlike the last conflict, Thompson's comments on these movements did not indicate his intention. In *Be filled with the spirit*, he said the voices "comment on the ensuing silence" and in this movement they "darkly record... unresponsiveness," so both phrases can still be directed inwardly and outwardly.²⁰⁰ This small issue does not change the message of the drama, but is important in considering their appropriate stage performance.

Sing unto him

The third chorus features another brief text, which again focuses directly on Choir II, instructing them with increasing intensity to sing. Again, there are two phrases: one inviting the mourners to sing, and another that relates to singing in some way. In this case, the complementary phrase does not connect another spiritual state to the activity of singing, but instead offers Choir II a possible subject matter for their song. When they sing, the mourners should "talk of all his wondrous works." The rhythm of the phrase "Sing unto him" matches the beginning of the second, "Talk ye of all...," a trait reflected in the subsequent setting, but this rhythmic parallel extends back to Part II as well in the series of despondent statements used by Choir II opening the debate: "Man that is born...," "He cometh forth...," and "All flesh shall perish..." With increasing intensity in the text, Thompson did not add a reflection on the silence to the end of this movement; instead, he added a segue directly to the next movement.

Utter a song

Choir I continues with more desperate language, dispensing with the more poetic requests to simply shout, "Utter a song." This verse fragment comes from the song of Deborah in the book of Judges, and acts as an introduction to one of the texts Thompson

²⁰⁰ Thompson, "Notes on a *Requiem*," 41-2.

selected before he planned the drama of the *Requiem*. As it is here, the question “Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?” acts as an “anguished” cry,²⁰¹ but in its biblical context is again quite different. The original question was given by Barzillai to King David, after the king had invited him to stay at the palace. Barzillai was old, and with his question was citing his lack of hearing as one of several reason to refuse, as he could not fully enjoy the palace entertainment. Regardless of the context, Thompson uses the text here to display Choir I as a passionate throng making one final plea, to which Choir II responds by bursting into song: “Blessed be the Lord God, who only doeth wondrous things.” With a wealth of brief statements of praise available in scripture, Thompson said that he chose this specific verse “from among several other appropriate ones, for its explosive initial letter *B*.”²⁰² This initial outpouring of praise is limited to this single phrase of text in Part III, leaving Part IV to serve as the entire “garment of praise.”

The Call to Song: Musical Setting

Be filled with the spirit

Over the course of “The Call to Song,” the pleas of Choir I gain intensity, so this first attempt has a simple musical theme. The musical structure in this movement reflects that of the text—an alternation between the “call” phrases and “none answered” reflections, in an arrangement ABABAB. With each successive iteration of the A and B sections, they gain intensity through length and complexity.

The theme of section A, sung by the sopranos and altos alone throughout the movement, is a simple melody in three parts, reflecting the structure of the text (fig. 6.1).

²⁰¹ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 42.

²⁰² Ibid., 42.

The first part rises from the tonic to the dominant, the second travels between the dominant and the tonic an octave higher, and the last phrase gently falls back to the tonic. Thompson's expressive indication "*dolce e semplice*" is perfectly suited to the message of this text and the melody given to it: most of the motion is stepwise, the prosody is sensitive and straightforward, and the melody contains nothing virtuosic at all. Thompson first sets this text as a three-part round, the second and third phrases of which are seen as the embellishing lines added to successive iterations of the A theme. As the plea becomes a duet and then a trio, it becomes more fervent without increasing in volume. The third iteration is extended with an additional cadence for more emphasis (fig. 6.2).

The reflective "none answered" statements are given by the tenors and basses. Like the soprano and alto theme, this one gains fervency each time through embellishment, lengthening, and added voice parts: the first opens and closes with two voices; the second, three; and the third, four (fig. 6.3). The harmonic pattern remains the same, embellishing the accented syllable of "an-swer('d)" with the Neapolitan of the initial chord; a harmony that contrasts the strict diatonicism of the alternate theme.²⁰³ The piece ends with two more open fifths on C-G in all voices to the text "none."

Though brief, Thompson struggled to perfect this movement: "This simple movement took a disproportionate number of days to write (five), the problem of timing was so important."²⁰⁴ He indicated a tempo of half-note = 60 at the beginning, and the

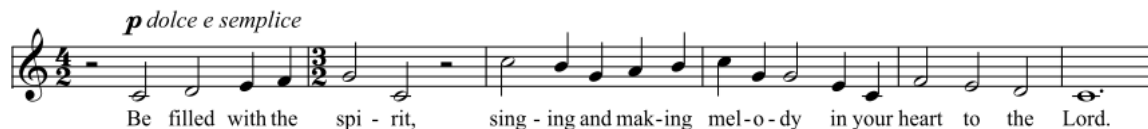


Figure 6.1. *Be filled with the spirit*, S. I, measures 1-6.

²⁰³ Ibid., 42. Though these chords do not function in a typical Neapolitan fashion, they were referred to as such by Thompson.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 40.

Figure 6.2 shows a musical score for three voices (S. 1, S. 2, and A.) across measures 18-26. The music is in 2/2 and 3/2 time signatures. The lyrics are: "Sing - - - - - ing, mak", "Sing - - - - - ing and", "Be filled with the spi - rit, sing - ing and mak - ing", "- ing mel - o - dy to the Lord, to the Lord.", "mak - ing mel - o - dy to the Lord, to the Lord.", "mel - o - dy in your heart to the Lord. in your heart to the Lord." The dynamics are *pp*, *p dolce e semplice*, and *p*. A bracketed two-measure extension is shown under the final phrase.

Figure 6.2. *Be filled with the spirit*, Choir I SSA, measures 18-26. If the bracketed two-measure extension were removed, this would show the three-part canon as Thompson originally composed it.

Figure 6.3 shows a musical score for three voices (Tenor, Bass, and Bass) across measures 7-8, 16-17, and 28-29. The music is in 4/2 and 3/2 time signatures. The lyrics are: "None an-swer'd.", "But none an - swer'", "None giv - eth an - swer.", "None giv - eth an - swer." The dynamics are *ppp*, *pp*, and *p*. The score includes a *triste* marking and a *divisi* instruction.

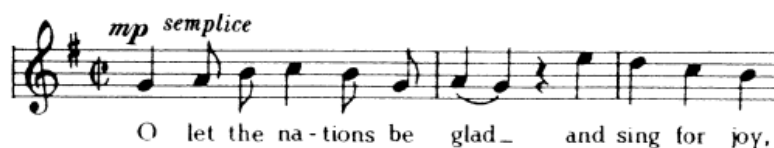
Figure 6.3. *Be filled with the spirit*, three “none answered” statements, measures 7-8, 16-17, and 28-29.

semplice indication suggests that the silences were carefully measured and should be observed as written. Pauses of anywhere from one to five beats are carefully measured throughout the movement. Precise timing and emphasis were clearly considered, even in the opening measures. Thompson chose to set the first three beats in a quadruple bar rather than a triple bar (like the rest of the melody) simply to take away emphasis from the first word and make the “spi-“ of “spirit” the first strong syllable (see fig. 6.1).

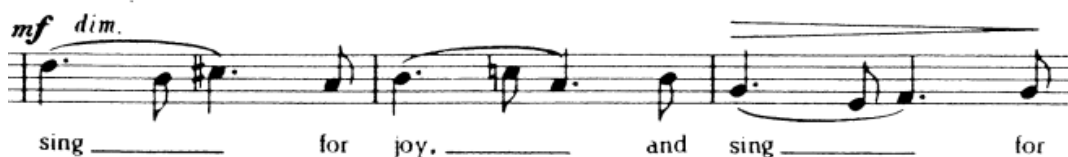
O let the nations be glad

Thompson used this brief text for the first of three fugues in the *Requiem*. After using the first movement of “The Call to Song” to address the mourners directly, this movement appears to be an example of the type of praise that the souls wish the mourners to adopt. The text is lively and has a simple message, and its setting is a buoyant and well-crafted fugue built on a simple subject. Dramatic tension is built through means of stretto, which becomes increasingly complex as the fugue progresses.

The subject of the fugue is brief, assigning eleven syllables to twelve notes (fig. 6.4a). Most of the material in the fugue is drawn from the subject, but there is one other recurring theme: a series of pitches descending stepwise, embellished with escape tones and appoggiaturas (fig. 6.4b).



6.4a: Tenor, measures 1-3.



6.4b: Tenor, measures 14-16.

Figure 6.4. *O let the nations be glad*, fugue subject (a) and secondary theme (b).

Following the sixteen-bar exposition, Thompson began to layer the theme on top of itself with stretto entrances, beginning with the soprano and tenor in octaves two beats apart in measure 19 (fig. 6.5). At this moment, Thompson discovered canonic possibilities of his fugue subject which he did not foresee, and began to explore that feature with similar pairs of entrances: tenor and bass, two beats apart at the fifth (mm. 27-28); and soprano and alto, two beats apart at the fifth (m. 30).²⁰⁵ Thompson took the canonic fugue one step further, introducing the fugue in a triple canon with entries separated by only a single beat in measure 39 (fig. 6.6) and again in measure 44. Finally, Thompson realized the full canonic possibilities of the fugue subject, setting all four voices in stretto in measure 46, three of the four voices in augmentation (fig. 6.7). The movement closes with the statement “But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear,” which, being clearly related in message to the reflections on silence from the previous movement, is set in a similar style. Thompson added altos to the statements this time, singing in extremely low *tessitura*, and again used a Neapolitan harmony on the penultimate chord.



Figure 6.5. *O let the nations be glad*, two subjects in canon, ST, measures 19-23.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 42. Thompson says that the canonic possibilities of the theme were discovered by accident.

mp
O let the na - tions be glad and sing for joy,

mp
O let the na - tions be glad and sing for joy,

mp
O let the na - tions be glad and sing for joy,

Figure 6.6. *O let the nations be glad*, three subjects in canon, SAT, measures 39-42.

[illegible]

Figure 6.7. *O let the nations be glad*, four subjects in canon, STB in augmentation, m. 45-52.

Figure 6.10 shows a musical score for a "Roulade" setting of "sing." It consists of four staves, each representing a different vocal part: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The music is written in G major and 4/4 time. Each staff begins with a "legato" marking and a "sing." line. The melody is a continuous eighth-note pattern, with some measures containing rests. The first staff has a "Him." marking above the first measure. The music concludes with a fermata in the final measure of each staff.

Figure 6.10. *Sing unto Him*, m. 3-7. "Roulade" setting of "sing."

Figure 6.11 shows a musical score for Choir I, measures 26-30. It consists of four staves, each representing a different vocal part: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The music is written in G major and 4/4 time. Each staff has a "mf" marking, a "dolce" marking, and a "poco rall." marking. The lyrics are "in - to sing - ing, and". The music consists of a continuous eighth-note pattern with some rests and a final measure with a fermata.

Figure 6.11. *The Peaceable Kingdom*: "But These are they," Choir I, measures 26-30.

in six-voice texture.²⁰⁹ While the imitative entrances give a feeling of individuals variously commanding the mourners to sing, this alternating theme creates a unified, relentless barrage of commands. When the theme arrives for the second time in measure 37, it builds from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*, the most dramatic crescendo in the movement.

The third theme Thompson presents sets only the word “sing” with roulades²¹⁰ of rolling sixteenth notes in all voices. Though the statements vary in their exact form as they appear, the general patterns of intervals and motion are established by the original statement in measures 3-7 (fig. 6.10). Setting the word “sing” with a melisma was not unprecedented for Thompson; he did so in movement six of *The Peaceable Kingdom*, in parallel motion between two voices (fig. 6.11). Parallel melismas in two or three voices are common in Thompson’s music, and only a year before he wrote the *Requiem*, he had used them extensively to set the most celebratory texts in the “Gloria” from the *Mass of the Holy Spirit* (fig. 6.12).

II
Gloria

Andante gioioso (♩ = 60)

The musical score shows four staves for voices and one for piano. The tempo is 'Andante gioioso (♩ = 60)'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The music is in 4/4 time. The lyrics 'Glo - ry, - glo - ry' are written below the notes. The piano part is marked 'ff legato'.

Figure 6.12. *Mass of the Holy Spirit*: “Gloria,” measures 1-2.

²⁰⁹The *divisi* in this passage is actually eight parts, but no more than two voice parts are divided at any one time. For example, at times sopranos and tenors are divided, but altos and basses are not, or vice versa.

²¹⁰ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 43. Thompson pulled this term from the French *rouler*, translated “to roll.”

When Thompson adopted this style in *Sing unto him*, he infused it with musical features from elsewhere in the piece. In *What man is he?*, there was considerable use of paired voices in inversion, which Thompson did again in this theme (fig. 6.10, mm. 6-7, SA and TB in parallel thirds, inverted). At two points later in the piece, he expanded this to three voices (SAA) inverted against two (BB) (fig. 6.13).

Figure 6.13 displays another direct quote from *What man is he?* in the soprano and alto parts. For six beats beginning at measure 29, the treble voices quote the life motive as it appears in measure 100 of *What man is he?*, only in diminution and without the bass part (fig. 6.14). This is fitting, as Choir I's goal of all of Part III is to link together "singing" and "life" in encouraging Choir II to put on the "garment of praise."

The image shows a musical score for measures 29 and 30 of the piece "Sing unto Him". The score is written for five parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and a lower Bass part. Measures 29 and 30 are indicated by the numbers 30 and 97 at the top right of the staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts feature a melodic line that is a diminution of the "life motive" from "What man is he?". The Bass and lower Bass parts provide a harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics "un-to Him;" are written under the Bass part in measure 29, and "sing, un-to Him," is written under the Bass part in measure 30. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Figure 6.13. *Sing unto Him*, measures 29-30. Compare to life motive in Figure 6.14.



Figure 6.14. *What man is he?*, measures 100-102, SAT.

The image shows five staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The first four staves are grouped by a brace on the left and contain the lyrics "Talk ye of all His won - drous" and "Him, of all His won - drous". Each of these staves begins with a dynamic marking of *(f)*. The fifth staff, on the right, contains the word "Sing" and "works." repeated three times. The music features a mix of eighth, quarter, and half notes, with some staves having a melisma line.

Figure 6.15. *Sing unto him*, measures 10-11.

With this “sing” theme material, Thompson wrote some of the most virtuosic music in the entire *Requiem*, employing the parallel melismas in as many as seven voice parts.

The fourth theme is the only one used for the text “Talk ye of all his wondrous works,” a homophonic declamatory statement that appears five times (fig. 6.15). In the text analysis, it was shown that the opening syllables of this text match those of the Choir II’s statements in *What man is he?*, and Thompson made that link clear by using the same rhythm and general melodic shape (see fig. 5.6, p. 121). When the theme returns at the

[illegible]

Figure 6.17. *Sing unto him*, measures 67-74.

but instead employed them as he found them useful for building dramatic tension. As they reappear, the themes gain complexity and volume, until finally the virtuosity is abandoned and the message is distilled into its simplest form for the coda (fig. 6.17).

Thompson crafted a fitting conclusion to this three-movement rise in dramatic intensity: the final measures are based on the four-note imitative theme, this time sung in unison with leaps expanded to an octave. To display increasing desperation, the command is repeated as it climbs chromatically, then is heard finally in augmentation. Again, the response from Choir II is only silence.

Utter a song

This movement contains the central dramatic climax of the entire *Requiem*, as the souls of the faithful make a final petition to the mourners. The mood has changed slightly, as Choir I has offered arguments in all variety of ways: canon, fugue, declamation, imitation, roulade, antiphony, and quotes of previous movements. After such an impassioned plea, Thompson chose to set the text of *Utter a song* not as a more resolute invitation, but rather as an act of desperation. Musically, there is nothing more complex or convincing that Choir I can offer, so Thompson wrote in simple, strong declamatory statements to reflect the “anguish” of the souls of the faithful.²¹¹

Before the climactic entry of Choir II, all of Choir I’s phrases are set in homophony that closely resembles the speech rhythms that an actor would use to deliver the same text. “Utter a song” is set to emphasize the first and last syllables, with a slight upward inflection in pitch. Thompson represented this with parallel minor triads in first inversion that descend and then leap to raise the theme a half-step (fig. 6.18). The combination of inverted triads and only a *mezzo forte* dynamic places the phrase in a far weaker context than the unison octaves that closed *Sing unto him*, reflecting the desperation of Choir I. Thompson increased dramatic tension quickly and subtly by adapting the repetition in four ways: 1) a faster rhythm for the opening syllables, 2) a stronger dynamic, 3) an internal repetition, and 4) an upward modulation three times the size.

The piece of text that was central to the *Requiem* in its inception, “Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?” appears next in declamatory style. The primary words in the phrase are emphasized in two ways: longer durations and

²¹¹ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 42.

Utter a Song

Andante moderato (♩ = 80). senza rigore: quasi recitativo

CHORUS I

SOPRANO
Ut - ter a song.

ALTO
Ut - ter a song.

TENOR
Ut - ter a song.

BASS
Ut - ter a song.

mf implorando *f dim. e rall.* *p*

a tempo *f* *3* *5* *ff dim. e rall.* *p*
Ut - ter a song, a song.

a tempo *f* *3* *ff dim. e rall.* *p*
Ut - ter a song, a song.

a tempo *f* *3* *ff dim. e rall.* *p*
Ut - ter a song, a song.

a tempo *f* *3* *ff dim. e rall.* *p*
Ut - ter a song, a song.

a tempo, con angoscia *ff*
Can I hear an - y more the voice of sing - ing

a tempo, con angoscia *ff*
Can I hear an - y more the voice of sing - ing

a tempo, con angoscia *ff*
Can I hear an - y more the voice of sing - ing

a tempo, con angoscia *ff*
Can I hear an - y more the voice of sing - ing

Figure 6.18. Utter a song, measures 1-20.

Allegro appassionato (♩ = 112)

10 *dim. e rall.* *mf* *p*

men _____ and sing - ing wom - en? _____ Can I?

dim. e rall. *mf* *p*

men _____ and sing - ing wom - en? _____ Can I?

dim. e rall. *mf* *p*

8 men _____ and sing - ing wom - en? _____ Can I?

dim. e rall. *mf* *p*

men _____ and sing - ing wom - en? _____ Can I?

(Chorus II lean forward Rise)

15 *rall.*

Can I? An - y more? An - y

rall.

Can I? An - y more? An - y

rall.

8 Can I? An - y more? An - y

rall.

Can I? An - y more? An - y

Figure 6.18. (continued)

upward leaps in the soprano line balanced by contrary motion in the bass. Though the rhythms and harmonies are different, the style used is similar to the pre-climax parallel in *The Peaceable Kingdom*, particularly in the way the soprano approaches and retreats from accented syllables, and is supported by the bass with contrary motion (fig. 6.19). Of the double-chorus techniques Thompson outlined in his “Notes on a *Requiem*,” he indicated that lapsing into fewer voices was one tool he used to add emphasis to important lines of music.²¹² As Choir I repeats “Can I?” Thompson makes use of only

²¹² Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 34.

two voices, allowing them then to expand outward chromatically until the upper and lower voices were paired in different major thirds (D-F-sharp, C-E). Together, these two chords represent the thirds of both the dominant and subdominant of G major, on which Choir II triumphantly enters in measure 17 after three movements of silence. To add a visual component to the musical effect of the doubling of voices singing, Thompson indicated that Choir II—who was instructed to sit at the beginning of Part III—should stand immediately before they begin to sing.

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system, measures 72-76, is marked **Movendo** and **f espressivo**. It features four staves with lyrics: "pangs and sor - row shall take hold of them; they shall be in". The tempo changes to **Ritenuato** and the dynamics to **p cresc.** in measure 76. The second system, measures 81-83, is marked **Tempo I**. It also features four staves with lyrics: "they shall be a - maz'd at one an - oth - er; their". The dynamics are **f** and **ff marcato**. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Figure 6.19. *The Peaceable Kingdom*: “The noise of a multitude,” measures 72-76 and 81-83.

For Choir II's climactic entry, Thompson combined several musical features to support the importance of this moment in the piece (fig. 6.20). First, as indicated in the text analysis, he specifically chose a text that began with an explosive consonant ([b]),

Lento (♩ = 63)
Chorus I

more? _____

more? An - y more? _____

more? Can I? _____

more? An - y _____

Lento (♩ = 63)
Chorus II
ff *gioioso, quasi campane*

Bless - ed be the Lord God, bless - ed be the Lord God,

Bless - - ed be the Lord God, Who

Bless - ed, bless - ed be the Lord God, bless - ed be the

Bless - - - ed be the

Lento (♩ = 63)
ff *gioioso*

Bless - - - ed be the

Figure 6.20. *Utter a song*, measures 17-20. Note: this music follows the excerpt in Figure 6.19 directly.

The musical score is divided into two systems, each with four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment staff. The lyrics are as follows:

System 1:

- Soprano: An y more?
- Alto: An - y, an - - y
- Tenor: Can I an - y
- Bass: more? an - y

System 2:

- Soprano: bless - ed be the Lord God, bless - ed be the Lord
- Alto: on - ly do - eth won - drous
- Tenor: Lord, bless - ed be the Lord, the Lord
- Bass: Lord God,

The score includes musical notation with various note values, rests, and articulation marks. There are two 'rall.' (rallentando) markings, one at the beginning of the second system and another at the end of the first system. The piano accompaniment features a prominent pedal point in the bass.

Figure 6.20. (continued)

and then voiced the opening *fortissimo* chord in the most resonant range for all voice parts. The other features are all related to musical content: sopranos and tenors are given an antiphonal “bell-like motive” high in their range; the basses provide a solid, yet active dominant pedal; and the altos introduce an augmented version of the forthcoming fugue subject.²¹³ Though still singing their earlier text, the music for Choir I is supportive: the

²¹³ Ibid., 42.

from the Choir II basses.²¹⁴ For additional unity, the sopranos of both choirs trade the “bell-like motive” from before, and the tenors of both choirs unite in an augmented iteration of the fugue subject in the tonic. The movement closes with a mixolydian cadence²¹⁵ and a C-major chord in eight-part harmony; the same tonality with which “The Call to Song” began, but with an entirely different affect.

The image displays two identical staves of musical notation for a choir. Each staff consists of four lines of music, representing Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts. The lyrics are written below the notes. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The lyrics are: "things, won - drous things, won - drous things, won - drous things, Who on - ly do - eth". The music features a mixolydian cadence and a C-major chord in eight-part harmony.

Figure 6.22. *Utter a song*, Choir II, measures 30-31.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 43.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 43. Thompson used the term “mixolydian cadence” to describe the harmony of this closing material. As it appears here, the cadence could be described in roman-numeral terms as flat-VII⁷ → I.

The Call to Song: Performance Considerations

Overall

The sustained growing intensity in this Part differs from the tension building in the previous two. Before the choirs contrasted with each other in terms of dialogue, style, and overall tone, but in “The Call to Song,” the drama of dialogue is removed and Choir I must build the tension on their own. A clear progression from the *dolce e semplice* style of the first movement to the desperation of the fourth must be communicated to the audience in both musical and visual ways.

Choir II has a challenging dramatic role in Part III as well. A note in the score instructs them to sit before it begins, which is advisable both for dramatic presence and the practical challenge of standing silently for an extended period of time. Further dramatic techniques could enhance the dramatic effect of the mourners as they sit quietly. As an active character in the drama, they must be *actively* silent, visually signaling their refusal to sing. Their demeanor should not be obstinate; rather, after being stunned and amazed by the “mystic demonstration of eternal life,” their resistance to join the song should be an extension of their being awestruck, a combination their fear of the unknown and lingering grief. Especially when they are addressed specifically by Choir I, they should respond by turning their faces down and away, because challenging the petitions of Choir I with direct eye contact could easily be interpreted as stubbornness instead. One of the most challenging moments for Choir II is the moment they rejoin the music, having to stand quickly and literally burst into song. This moment, and the acting leading up to it, will need to be well-rehearsed. On a practical note, it is important for Choir II to remain in character the entire time they are seated, so keeping scores closed (or open to

their next entry) until they are needed again is an important visual detail. These few dramatic details are not written in the score, but are again ‘staging’ suggestions that could enhance the drama.

Be filled with the spirit

Two important features of this movement are its simplicity and careful timing. This is the first of three attempts to invite the mourners to song, but the delivery of each line should not foreshadow how difficult the task will prove to be. The character of Choir I believes that their entreaty will suffice each time it is tried, so that optimism should come through, particularly in this opening movement.

Soft, simple, unison lines are often challenging for a choir to execute. After the sustained period of intense singing that precedes this movement, the singers must project serenity—maintaining the concentration and breath support necessary to make this line sound effortless will be a challenging task for the singers. In addition to sufficient rehearsal and ample breath support, it may be useful to rehearse these entrances occasionally at unexpected or out-of-context moments in the rehearsal to get the singers used to dealing with the challenging shift in mood that this entry requires.

In the original score, Thompson had indicated only *dolce* at the beginning, adding *e semplice* during the revision for publication. Though the exact reason is unknown, Thompson may have been guarding against the tendency to either over-sing this melody, or sing it with too much tempo and dynamic variation. The performance recommendation, then, is to keep the tempo steady and the phrasing subtle, observing appropriate text stress but remaining within the range of *piano* as indicated. The additional voices of the canon added in successive appearances are all marked *pp*, and

should thus remain as background to the original theme which, by nature of being lower in pitch, could struggle to remain prominent.

For the series of “none answered” statements, relative simplicity should dominate. It is tempting to use significant rubato on each chord, darken the tone color, and crescendo into each Neapolitan harmony for added effect. The first two of the entrances are marked *triste*, which indicates that the souls of the faithful expected a positive result and did not receive one, but these are only the first in a series of rejections, so the sadness of the first reflections should not seem overwhelming. Following this movement is a buoyant fugue, so Choir I’s optimism is not broken by these initial rejections.

Finally, the lengths of the rests should be strictly observed. Thompson’s few comments on this movement revealed that the rhythmic timing of the movement was one of his greatest challenges. He chose to separate the statements with measured rests, not rests with fermatas, so the relative lengths of the silences should be preserved. These moments are also useful for the dramatic staging, providing time for glances between the choirs to confirm the reaction.

O let the nations be glad

Each succeeding movement grows in complexity, as Choir I petitions Choir II to join in their song. Choir I has reached a logical conclusion at this point: a simple invitation was not enough, so perhaps a joyful fugue will be.

The overall character of the fugue is inviting—the subject is simple, diatonic, and even in stretto entirely consonant due to its canonic features. From the standpoint of Choir I’s character, they are inviting, but also enticing Choir II to join them by exhibiting joy, so simplicity and consonance are ideal features. As in the previous movement,

Thompson used the word *semplice* to describe the entrance of each voice part. After remaining at fairly moderate dynamics for most of the movement, the *fortissimo* climax of the fugue should be viewed in that context; it will be entirely unlike the *fortissimo* moments at the height of the debate in Part II. Choir I must appear to Choir II and the audience as if they are enjoying themselves, and should thus make even the most dynamically intense portions of the fugue sound easy. In the overall story, the purpose of this movement is to build dramatic tension by the sophistication, volume, and excitement of the petition, not yet by a more strident tone quality (which is reserved for the more desperate pleas of *Utter a song*).

Again, Choir I should be surprised and saddened by the fact that their attempt to rouse the mourners did not work. Taking a cue from dramatic context again, the sadness conveyed by this next reflection, “But they hearkened not...,” should be more acute than those in the previous movement. During their previous reflection, Choir I was about to present a lively fugue, but this time they respond with determination, seriousness, and vigor—all reactions that would come from a deeper sadness. Thompson reinforced this idea by providing a more prolonged reflection and a slower indicated tempo than the previous reflections.

Sing unto him

All of the features that make this plea unique from the previous ones should be emphasized. The overall approach to this movement is distinct from the other two because the mood of Choir I progresses significantly over the course of the movement, whereas in the previous two, the mood shift was present, but minimal. The attitude at the beginning is determination, and by the end it has turned to desperation.

This mood shift can be seen in Thompson's treatment of the individual themes as they appear throughout the movement. For example, the alternating theme appears only twice. The first time, it intensifies from *forte* to *fortissimo* over eight bars, but the second time it is expanded to twelve bars, and travels far more dramatically from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*. Each time the roulade theme appears, it comes at a higher pitch level and with greater *divisi*. By the end of the movement, the singers could enhance the drama by showing spent emotion with their faces.

In many ways, this is the most technically challenging movement in the *Requiem*, especially due to the roulade passages. They begin and end with suddenly, and often cue off of the sparsely-textured imitative theme. Each of those cues will need to be meticulously rehearsed, because those particular lines are extremely challenging to join in progress. The two moments identified as also having the life motive (mm. 29-30, 57-58, see fig. 6.13) are the most challenging in that regard for several reasons: 1) the choir is divided in six voices, 2) the passage itself is long and at the end of an extended *roulade* portion, 3) the pattern modulates, and 4) the inverted motion creates thoroughly dense harmonies. Such moments will need significant rehearsal at slower tempos to establish the harmonies of the parallel voices before rehearsing them together.

Another challenge in *Sing unto him*, evidenced by both live recordings, is maintaining tempo, which has a tendency to slow during the melismas and accelerate through the antiphonal passages. Thompson reduced the indicated tempo from 100 to 92 in his pre-publication revision, and neither of the recordings achieve even the slower tempo. Three of the themes are easily performed at 92, or even 100, but the roulades require great flexibility. For the purposes of the drama, the movement needs to sound



Figure 6.23. Example of one dynamic shaping possibility for the *roulade* passages of *Sing unto Him*.

hurried, virtuosic, almost frantic, so the tempo should be as quick as it can be performed well. Increasing the speed of the roulades will require three important strategies: first, by fixing the pitches in the minds of the singers so that each phrase can be produced accurately by habit; second, by phrasing each run so that the singers drive to and from goal pitches (fig. 6.23); and third, by resisting extreme dynamics to guard against tense vocal production.

The issue of tempo rushing during the antiphonal passages would likely be minimal if a faster tempo is achieved for the movement as a whole. In the Harvard recording, the tempo of the antiphonal passages accelerated towards and settled near the indicated tempo of quarter note = 92, only to slow down again in the next roulade.²¹⁶

Because this is the most complex and virtuosic musical writing for Choir I in the entire work, it will require significant rehearsal. But this and the following movement are also the most dramatically complex movements of the *Requiem*, so the expressive impact will also need to come through in the performance. *Sing unto him* is episodic, and in the musical analysis it became clear that Thompson increased musical tension through volume and increasingly complex variations of the themes, but kept the themes distinct from each other throughout. Every reappearance of a theme is an opportunity for the

²¹⁶ Randall Thompson, *Requiem*, Harvard Glee Club and Radcliffe Choral Society, dir. Elliot Forbes, Technicord T15-16, 1959. For comparison, the Catholic University performance in 1966 began with a tempo of quarter note = 84, but reached tempos up to quarter note = 112 during the antiphonal passages.

singers to reinterpret the theme with the increasing desperation of “the souls of the faithful,” particularly through facial expression and body language.

Utter a song

This is the most important movement in the work from the standpoint of drama. Thompson’s care for timing and affect, as displayed in the musical analysis, will produce the correct effect if his indications are closely observed. During the homophony before the climax, dynamics and rhythm are the focus; and in the climax itself, careful attention to each voice’s role in the texture becomes most important.

Sing unto him closed with powerful unison “shouts” from Choir I, but that fervor is diminished slightly at the beginning of *Utter a song* through the use of softer dynamics. Thompson desired the chords to be speech-like, so even though the rhythms are precisely indicated for the first two phrases, he wanted the words themselves to sound natural, and tried to indicate that as nearly as he could with three expressive indications and three different types of articulation. The indicated tempo is quarter note = 80, but Thompson provided flexibility with *senza rigore*; *quasi recitative*, and he added to that the notation *implorando* for the character.²¹⁷ Relative syllabic strength was quite important to Thompson, so he used accents, *tenuto*, and staccato markings to indicate the articulations as precisely as he could. The first three notes of the movement each use one of the three different markings (see fig. 6.18, Choir I, m. 1). His prescription in this matter obliges strict adherence from the performers. For example, in revising the *Utter a song* for publication, Thompson did not change a single note, but saw fit to modify the articulation on “a” in measure 1 from *tenuto* to staccato, while leaving the *tenuto* on “a” in measure 4.

²¹⁷ *Senza rigore*—“without rigor,” meaning the tempo is flexible; *quasi recitative*—“like a recitative,” which encourages close attention to speech rhythms; and *implorando*—“imploring.”



Figure 6.24. *Utter a song*, S. I; m. 8, 12, and 13. Three distinct settings of “Can I,” with precise articulations.

As the dramatic tension increased with the question “Can I hear any more...?”, Thompson’s care for rhythm and articulation continued. Only two chords between measures 8 and 16 lack a specific articulation, which means that the nuance between all six articulation markings used must be identified and performed (accent, staccato, *staccatissimo*, *martellato*, *legato*, and no marking). As an example, the pair of words “Can I” is set three different ways (fig. 6.24): first, in two eighth notes, syncopated, and in series with the rest of the phrase; the second time extracted, again syncopated, but with “can” extended and “I” shortened with a *staccatissimo* marking; and lastly, un-syncopated, with even strength and duration, but *martellato* (or “hammered”). Thompson employed one articulation mark oddly in this passage—before each syncopated entrance, he placed an accent over the preceding rest (seen twice in fig. 6.24). Though it is unclear how one would accent a silence, Thompson attempted to add even more weight to the feeling of syncopation with this odd marking. In this brief passage, Thompson showed how he prescribed as much as he could in an attempt to draw maximum effect from the text; an acute example of a practice that extends through the entire *Requiem*.

When Choir II finally enters in measure 17, the style changes abruptly from intense homophony to three simultaneous modes of composition. The voices have different relative importance in the texture, so their dynamics should be balanced

accordingly. The most important text to communicate is that of Choir II, and that responsibility resides primarily with Choir II tenors and sopranos, whose bell-like motives deliver the text quickly and repeatedly. Thompson brought them to the foreground by accenting every syllable of their lines, and accenting none of the other music. The next most important voice in this complex texture is the alto of Choir II, who is introducing a fugue subject. Every other voice is merely supporting the background structure, and should recede appropriately. All of Choir I and the basses of Choir II should emphasize their syllable changes in their otherwise slow movement, but should otherwise sustain their held pitches at lesser volume. On a sustained high G, Choir I sopranos have the greatest potential to overshadow the rest of the ensemble.

The fugue that follows should be interpreted differently than the previous one. Solid stepwise motion and dotted rhythms imbue this theme with confidence and regality, contrasting the simple ebullience of the *O let the nations be glad*. This interpretation is bolstered by the tempo indication *Allegro giusto*, which commands an unwavering pulse, and by the structure which is free of stretto, allowing each entrance of the theme to announce itself boldly. For Choir I's dramatic part, this short fugue is an opportunity to marvel at the first outpouring of praise from Choir II. It would be appropriate for them look at Choir I with satisfaction.

The principles that applied to the climax point (mm. 17-20) apply to the closing section as well, though there are fewer pedal tones to recede into the background. Because this is the first true partnership between the two choirs, there should be a level of excitement on the singers' faces not yet seen in the performance; likewise, any dark or covered tone color can be fully exchanged for the richest, most vibrant tone possible. The

final cadence of the movement ends the central climax of the entire *Requiem*, so it should receive the loudest dynamic, something Thompson facilitated by letting all voices sing in their most resonant range.

Summary

“The Call to Song” is the final ascent to the dramatic climax of the work. Though Choir II remains silent until the end of the fourth movement, they share in the responsibility for pushing this dramatic intensity to its highest level. Over the course of three movements, Choir I must gradually intensify their mood from simple optimism to desperation in their pleas to the mourners, whose prolonged silence must produce a dramatic effect as powerful as their outburst of praise in the final movement.

The tension of Part II was built mainly with its lengthy and strongly-worded text, which was packaged in cohesive musical themes and textures. For Part III, Thompson let musical tension take the foreground in, relying on larger forms and a large variety of compositional techniques to add tension through their complexity. Choir I first asks the mourners to sing with a simple canon, then an inviting fugue. Choir II responds with silence, and Thompson packages their final plea (*Sing unto him*) in the most virtuosic writing in the entire *Requiem*. The desperate pleas that begin *Utter a song* rely almost entirely on text rhythm, and Choir II sings their own fugue after their climactic reentry.

Thompson again used precise notation and rhythmic pacing to heighten the drama of Part III. *Be filled with the spirit* should be sung simply, with deference to the rhythms indicated. *O let the nations be glad* is a joyful fugue, that should sound inviting and ebullient. Many of the challenges in *Sing unto him* arise out of the virtuosic writing and the need to maintain a strict tempo. The climactic movement *Utter a song* is precisely

notated and expertly paced for maximum dramatic impact, and should end with the loudest cadence in the entire *Requiem*.

Chapter 7: Part IV, “The Garment of Praise”

The Garment of Praise: The Text

At the close of Part III, the “chorus of mourners” (Choir II) finally began to sing after numerous petitions of increasing intensity given by the chorus of the faithful (Choir I). Choir I had prophesied in Part II that by their act of singing and praising God, Choir II would be comforted in their grief (*Good tidings to the meek*), saying that they must put on “the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” The principle climax of the *Requiem* was the moment in Part III when Choir II began to sing, and Part IV follows with what Thompson called a “cumulative paean,” in which the faithful and the mourners join together in praise. As told by the faithful in Part II, this act of praise will bring the mourners comfort.

IV: The Garment of Praise

*Sing with the spirit*Choir I

Sing with the spirit.
And sing with the understanding also.
(I Corinthians 14:15)

Choir II

I will sing with the spirit
and I will sing with the understanding also
(I Corinthians 14:15)

Let everything that hath breath

Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.
(Psalm 150:6)

Let the inhabitants of the rock sing,
let them shout from the top of the mountains.
(Isaiah 42:11)

Choirs I and II

Break forth into singing ye mountains,
O forest and every tree therein.
(Isaiah 44:23)

Let them give glory

Let them give glory unto the Lord
and declare his praise in the islands.
(Isaiah 42:12)

Let the earth rejoice;
let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.
(Psalm 97:1)

Praise Him all ye stars of light

Praise him all ye stars of light.
(Psalm 148:3)

Let the heaven and earth praise him.
(Psalm 69:34)

The morning stars sang together,
and all the sons of God shouted for joy.
(Job 38:7)

For they went at large like horses and leaped like lambs,
praising thee, O Lord.
(Wisdom of Solomon 19:9)

I am their music

I am their music,
(Lamentations 3:63)

And now am I their song.
(Job 30:9)

I will praise the Lord with my whole heart;
(Psalm 111:1)

Till he fill thy mouth with laughing
and thy lips with rejoicing.
(Job 8:21)

Sing with the spirit

Now that Choir II has chosen to praise God, Choir I teaches them how. Thompson chose the words of Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, from within a series of

chapters that are the most elaborate instruction concerning Christian worship contained in the Bible. The text says to “sing with the spirit and with the understanding also,” or with both heart and mind.²¹⁸ In “Notes on a *Requiem*,” Thompson called this text “the perfect motto for all singers,” and wrote to Elliot Forbes following the 1959 Harvard performance that the choir “sang with the Spirit and they sang [with] the understanding also.”²¹⁹ For this scene in the *Requiem*, Thompson used the text to create a call from Choir I and a response from Choir II. In doing so, he adapted the text slightly by placing “I will” at the beginning of each phrase for Choir II’s response. After ignoring inconsistencies in tense and voice throughout the rest of the assembled text, it is notable that this is the only instance in the *Requiem* where extra-biblical words are included. The addition of those two words is important to the scene, though: as Choir I’s instructs, Choir II does not merely echo the command, but instead gives a personal affirmative response.

Hortatory Choruses:

Let everything that hath breath, Let them give glory, Praise Him all ye stars of light

The following three movements have the same basic text structure, and thus it is appropriate to analyze their texts together. Thompson referred to them all as “hortatory” choruses, and in each there is both a call to praise (“hortatory statement”) given by

²¹⁸ More literal Bible translations use the word “mind” rather than “understanding.” The New International Version, English Standard Version, and New American Standard Versions all fall into that category.

²¹⁹ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 43. and Randall Thompson to Elliot Forbes, May 8, 1959, Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 28: Folder “University of California”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Choir I, and a subsequent chorus of praise shared by both choirs.²²⁰ Each call is specific in the praise it seeks, and the texts of the choruses compliment them.

The first call is in two parts: phrase one introduces the entire section (“Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord”), and phrase two gives a specific praise to offer (“Let the inhabitants of the rock sing...”). As has already been seen in the previous three text analyses, at times Thompson took texts out of their context and used them in an entirely new way, at other times chose them specifically for practical musical reasons, and at other times assembled texts to give them deeper meaning. The first statement of this movement is of the last kind: Thompson’s initial call to praise is the last verse of all of the entire book of Psalms, the largest collection of poetic texts of praise in all of scripture.

After calling the entire creation to praise, Choir I then calls the first specific group to sing: “the inhabitants of the rock.” The praise text that complements this call is also drawn from the book of Isaiah, but talks of the mountains, forests, and trees bursting into song when God redeems Israel. The second declaration of praise is to be made “in the islands,” which is the text that directly follows the call to “the inhabitants of the rock” in the book of Isaiah, chapter 42. This call to “the islands” is reflected in its complementary praise text “Let the multitude of isles be glad thereof,” taken from the Psalms.

The final “hortatory statement” calls the stars, then all heaven and earth to praise God, which is answered by two more reflecting phrases. Thompson assembled this final section of text in a way that gave each phrase special meaning. The first phrase is taken from the book of Job, when God finally speaks to Job late in the book. Thompson drew

²²⁰ “Hortatory” means “calling or urging to a specific action.” It will be used throughout this chapter to refer to the interior movements of Part IV (“hortatory choruses”), and for the “call to praise” statements within each of those choruses (“hortatory statements”).

several texts from Job for Part II as despairing arguments for the mourners during the debate on immortality. Texts from Job are well-suited to this role particularly because so much of its story is filled with pain and death. In Part IV, however, Thompson uses the book of Job in praise, quoting God speaking about the time of creation: “The morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” The “sons” in this case are angels, not men, but Thompson gives “sons” a double meaning by following that text with a scene describing the Israelites.²²¹ The last text of praise is drawn from the apocryphal book The Wisdom of Solomon, and “depicts the frenzied joy of the Israelites after crossing through the Red Sea.”²²² The text itself shows an intensification of the praise offered by the two choirs: in the quoted text, the Israelites jump and dance, expressing their praise physically, because their joy and gratitude cannot be sufficiently described with singing alone.

Looking at the three sets of “hortatory statements” and praise texts in total, a pattern emerges that shows praise spreading from near to far. The first praise is of the mountains, forests, and the people in them; or what is nearest to the characters in the *Requiem* drama. The message is then sent out to distant lands on the earth, represented by the “multitude of isles.” Finally, the praise reaches all the way to the stars, enveloping all “the heavens and earth.” Compared to the previous two parts of the *Requiem*, very little happens in the plot of the story during “The Garment of Praise,” so this progression of praise from near to far is one way Thompson created dramatic motion.

²²¹ Job 38:7, literally translated from the Hebrew, does refer to “sons of God,” but many modern translations use the word “angels” (NIV, NLT, etc.). The context makes this more clear—the statement comes at the end of God’s description of early creation, before mankind was created, thus the only “sons of God” in existence were the angels. The segment of text begins “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?...when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:4,7 KJV).

²²² Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 44.

I am their music

The text for the final movement in “The Garment of Praise” is the fulfillment of the first movement: the mourners were told how to sing in the first, and they have finished their singing in the last. The structure of this text differs from the opening, though. In the first movement Choir I instructed and Choir II responded with the same text. Choir I does not instruct any longer, and instead reflects on the fact that the mourners no longer need their encouragement. They have taken up the song of praise themselves: “I am their music, and now am I their song.” These two texts are reinterpreted from their original context to a greater degree than any other passages in the *Requiem*. They are essentially the same statement, one given by the prophet Jeremiah in the book of Lamentations, and the other by Job. Both statements refer to the people around them mocking them in song, not in praise or celebration.²²³ The fact that Thompson used these texts as the moment of greatest satisfaction for the chorus of the faithful is his greatest departure from the original meaning of the text.

Regardless of context, the voice of the “I am their music” phrases is peculiar. When Choir I says “I am their song,” they imply that Choir II has been singing about them, even though the direction of all of the preceding praise has been toward God. Two possible interpretations then exist: the faithful could be reflecting on the fact that they have given a song to the mourners to sing (i.e. “they are now singing my song”), or they could be acting as the voice of God (i.e. “I am [God is] now their song”). The difference is subtle but important: if the first interpretation is correct, the mourners have just received a song to sing for their own comfort, and the story effectively ends; if the latter

²²³ In other translations this meaning is more clear: “Look at them! Sitting or standing, they mock me in their songs.” Lamentations 3:63 (NIV).

is true, the mourners have not only been comforted, but have also received salvation and will eventually share in the glory that the faithful have. The statements of Choir II that follow do not necessarily suggest either interpretation, but the opening movement of Part V favors the latter, with the text “Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.”

Choir II then proceeds to make two statements. The first mirrors their two texts in the opening movement of Part IV, becoming the third “I will” statement they sing: “I will praise the Lord with my whole heart.” The final statement, which closes the movement, is again confusing due to the voice in which it is written: “Till he fill thy mouth with laughing and thy lips with rejoicing.” There is little mistaking the “he” in this phrase to refer to God, but if “thy” is taken literally, this statement would be directed to the chorus of the faithful. If understood that way, Choir II’s praise becomes conditional rather than saving. Instead, this phrase may be taken as another prophetic statement to all of the righteous, which now includes both choirs. Thompson again used a passage from the book of Job to balance the negative statements drawn from the same book earlier in the *Requiem*, and in its biblical context, this phrase does speak of how God treats righteous men.

Though the principal plot conflict of the *Requiem* had been satisfied, Thompson still crafted a text for “The Garment of Praise” that had some dramatic momentum. Most of this movement variously manifests praise, but Thompson placed the episodes in an order that gradually intensified the praise as it spread to include all of creation.

Thompson framed the praise episodes with introductory and concluding movements,

which show Choir I first instructing Choir II how to praise, then afterward show Choir II transformed themselves through the act of praise.

The Garment of Praise: The Musical Setting

This movement manifests an ABA form. The outer choruses mirror each other as introduction and conclusion (A) and between them is an outpouring of praise in a series of choruses (B). Thompson further unified the outer movements by providing them with a similar musical affect and some identical thematic material. The central choruses of praise are unified by their alternation of hortatory statements and responses, and through the wide variety of double chorus techniques employed that are unique to Part IV.

It is worth noting that in the manuscript score, Thompson did not label all of Part IV as “The Garment of Praise.” That title did not appear in the score until the second movement, *Let everything that hath breath*, which was labeled “1.” at that point (fig. 7.1). Because “the garment” itself is the series of hortatory/praise-chorus pairs, it makes sense to not include this introductory movement, or the closing movement, under that heading. For consistency among Parts I-V in the publication process, the composer chose to label all of Part IV “The Garment of Praise,” but his first instinct was to separate the A sections from the B sections. Musically, they are quite different, and can be understood as distinct scenes in the drama.

This overall closed ternary structure was one feature that made it logical to extract and publish “The Garment of Praise” separately. More importantly, few parts of the *Requiem* work well as extracted pieces because the meanings of their texts are drawn from their dramatic context. However, in Part IV the plot is mostly static, and thus it makes sufficient musical sense alone.

67.

Lento e devoto ($\text{♩} = 52$) *Part IV*
Sing with the spirit

pp
Sing — with the spir - it;
Sing — with the spir - it;
Sing,
Sing — with the spir - it;

pp
and
pp
and
pp
and

69.

The Garment of Praise
1. Let everything that hath breath

Allegro ($\text{♩} = 80$)

ff marcato
Let ev-'ry-thing that hath breath —
ff marcato
Let ev-'ry-thing that hath breath —
ff marcato
Let ev-'ry-thing that hath breath —
ff marcato
Let ev-'ry-thing that hath breath —
praise the Lord.

Figure 7.1. Titles for the first two movements of Part IV, as seen in the manuscript version of the score. The title “The Garment of Praise” was originally reserved for only movements 2-4 of Part IV.

Sing with the spirit

Though the first and the last movements Part IV share musical material, they are different enough to be explained separately. The text is structured as two phrases exchanged between Choirs I and II, with the addition of the words “I will” to the phrases of Choir II.

Thompson set these phrases as a “short antiphonal song, like a responsive prayer”²²⁴ using one simple melody seen in the soprano of Choir I at the outset (fig. 7.2). Once again Thompson set the word “sing” melismatically and other words syllabically,

IV
The Garment of Praise
Sing with the spirit

Lento e devoto (♩ = 52)

The musical score for 'The Garment of Praise' is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 1-4) shows the Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts. The Soprano and Bass parts have long melismas on the word 'sing', while the Alto and Tenor parts have shorter melismas. The second system (measures 5-7) shows the Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts. The Soprano and Bass parts have long melismas on the word 'sing', while the Alto and Tenor parts have shorter melismas. The lyrics are 'Sing with the spirit' and 'I will sing with the'.

Figure 7.2. *Sing with the spirit*, measures 1-7. Note the title “The Garment of Praise” on this movement, compared to Fig. 7.1.

²²⁴ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 43.

(pp) 5
 and sing with the un - der - stand - ing.
 (pp)
 and sing with the un - der - stand - ing.
 (pp)
 and sing with the un - der - stand - ing.
 (pp)
 and sing with the un - der - stand - ing.
 spir - it, 5 and I will sing with the un - der -
 spir - it, (pp) and I will sing with the un - der -
 spir - it, (pp) and I will sing with the un - der -
 and I will sing with the un - der - (pp)
 (pp) with the spir - it, 10 with the un - der -
 (pp) with the spir - it, (pp) with the un - der -
 (pp) with the spir - it, (pp) with the un - der -
 (pp) with the spir - it, (pp) with the un - der -
 stand - ing, p dolcissimo with the spir - it,
 stand - ing, p with the spir - it,
 stand - ing, p with the spir - it,
 stand - ing, p with the spir - it,
 stand - ing, p with the spir - it,

Figure 7.2. (continued)



Figure 7.3. Fugue themes from Part III, showing the common rising-fourth shape.

as in *Sing unto him*. The melody rises stepwise from the dominant to the tonic and back again, covering a perfect fourth. This same motion was present in both fugue themes from “The Call to Song;” the rising perfect fourth announced each new fugal entry (fig. 7.3). By quoting that shape again, Thompson directly links those outpourings of praise to those to come in “The Garment of Praise.” The composer’s use of this shape goes beyond the *Requiem*, though. The imitative theme of the short “Alleluia, amen” that closes *The Last Words of David* (1949) is melodically identical, and is used in both cases to ascend first from dominant to tonic (fig. 7.2, m. 1; fig. 7.4, m. 31), then from tonic to subdominant (fig. 7.2, m. 5; fig. 7.4, m. 32).

With this basic theme, Thompson set all of the text, modifying the music slightly to compensate for the various numbers of syllables in each case. To add the words “I will” to each of Choir II’s responses, he added notes at the beginning, and in doing so was able to create an overlap between the Choirs as they traded phrases (e.g. fig. 7.1, mm. 2 and 6). Thompson felt that giving the choirs identical musical phrases to exchange would limit the differences between them too much, so the two initial phrases of Choir I (measures 1 and 5) are scored in close position and those of Choir II (measures 3 and 7)

The musical score is for measures 31-33 of 'The Last Words of David'. It is written in 4/4 time and the key of A-flat major (three flats). The score consists of four staves. The lyrics are 'Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu -'. The dynamics are marked as *pp* (pianississimo) and *p* (piano). The melody is stepwise and delicate, with a focus on the text.

Figure 7.4. *The Last Words of David*, measures 31-33.

are in open position. The resulting effect, then, “is not one of a continual four-part chorus but of two such choruses conversing in contrasting sonorities.”²²⁵ After the initial phrases were set in measures 1-8, Thompson repeated fragments of text to have three more short exchanges: “with the spirit,” “with the understanding,” and “also.”

The affect produced in this short movement is delicate and gentle. Thompson uses no pitches outside of the key (A-flat major), and almost all motion is stepwise. It is also clear that it was important to Thompson that this affect remain throughout, because he maintained it by placing a dynamic marking at the start of every phrase (whether it represented a change or not), ranging only between *pianississimo* and *piano dolcissimo*.

²²⁵ Ibid., 43.

Let everything that hath breath

In the text analysis it was helpful to address the series of “hortatory choruses” as a single unit, but their musical settings are distinct enough that they should be discussed individually. What they do share in common is Thompson’s new compositional freedom at this point in the drama. In his essay, Thompson identified a number of compositional possibilities that the double-choir texture provided him, but had used few of the diverse techniques in Parts I-III. The story being told in those movements required the two choirs to act in conflict, not partnership, thus limiting Thompson’s use of standard double-choir techniques. With the characters of the drama reconciled, all previous barriers were removed, and Thompson utilized the gamut of techniques available to him in the praise choruses.

Another common trait among the three “hortatory choruses” is that all three of the “hortatory statements” are delivered by the baritones of Choir I, and each new antiphonal theme is introduced by Choir II. So, in each case, the “chorus of the faithful” calls for an act of praise, and the “chorus of mourners” begins it.

Let everything that hath breath is the first chorus in the series. As described above, this first “hortatory statement” is actually two: the first phrase introduces the entire series, and the second identifies the first manifestation of praise. Thompson recognized this musically by having the combined choir respond to the first phrase with an echo, not a chorus (fig. 7.5). The melody used for this opening directly relates to the eternal God theme that permeated “The Triumph of Faith,” using both the minor third above and the major second below a starting pitch (see fig. 5.18, p. 135). Following the echo, Thompson set the remaining phrase in a quasi-recitative style: a unison line with

Allegro (♩ = 80) *ff marcato*

Let

Let

Let

(Bassoones only) *ff marcato*

Let ev - 'ry thing that hath breath _____ praise the Lord. _____

Allegro (♩ = 80) *ff marcato*

Let

Let

Let

Let

ev - 'ry thing that hath breath _____ praise the Lord. _____

ev - 'ry thing that hath breath _____ praise the Lord. _____

ev - 'ry thing that hath breath _____ praise the Lord. _____

Let the in -

ev - 'ry thing that hath breath _____ praise the Lord. _____

ev - 'ry thing that hath breath _____ praise the Lord. _____

ev - 'ry thing that hath breath _____ praise the Lord. _____

ev - 'ry thing that hath breath _____ praise the Lord. _____

Figure 7.5. *Let everything that hath breath*, measures 1-6.

text-derived rhythms and unstable key center, but with accented syllables arranged to allow the pulse to remain steady (fig. 7.6). It is arranged in three short phrases reflecting the structure of the text: the first phrase is a complete statement, musically and textually; the second and third statements are a pair, with a crescendo (“shout”) tying the subject to its accompanying prepositional phrases.

Mountains, forests, and trees are the subject of the corresponding chorus of praise. The theme is given out by Choir II, and is echoed by Choir I imitatively. Thompson said that “horn-like figures metaphorically illustrate the words ‘mountains’ and ‘forest’” in this movement.²²⁶ The figures used for those two words are upper or lower neighbor tones and a brisk compound meter (fig. 7.7). Even more horn-like are the upward octave leaps on “break forth” (e.g. fig. 7.7, m. 13-15, S. I and II). The entire episode is only twelve measures long, the simplest of the three praise choruses in formal design.

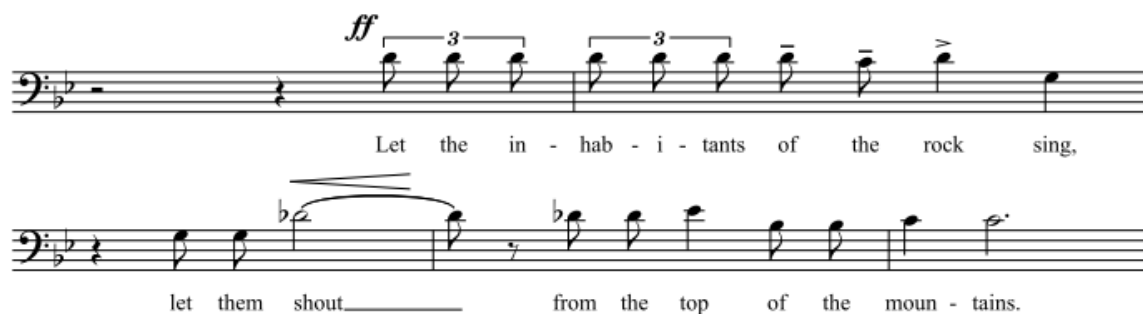


Figure 7.6. “Hortatory statement” from *Let everything that hath breath*, measures 6-10.

²²⁶ Ibid., 43.

Più mosso (♩ - 80)

f

Break forth in - to sing - ing, ye moun - tains, break

f

Break forth in - to sing - ing, ye moun - tains, break

f

Break forth in - to sing - ing, ye moun - tains, break

Tutti

f

Break forth in - to sing - ing, ye moun - tains, break

Più mosso (♩ - 80)

forth in - to sing - ing, ye moun - tains, break forth, _____

forth in - to sing - ing, ye moun - tains, break forth in - to sing - ing, ye

forth in - to sing - ing, ye moun - tains, break forth in - to sing - ing, ye

forth in - to sing - ing, ye moun - tains, break forth in - to sing - ing, ye

Figure 7.7. *Let everything that hath breath*, measures 11-17.

15

forth, _____ O for - est, O for -

forth in - to sing - ing, ye moun - tains, O for - est, O for -

forth in - to sing - ing, ye moun - tains, O for - est, O for -

forth in - to sing - ing, ye moun - tains, O for - est, O for -

15

break forth, _____ O for - est, O for - est and

moun - tains, O for - est and ev - 'ry tree there-in, and

moun - tains, O for - est and ev - 'ry tree there-in, and

moun - tains, O for - est and ev - 'ry tree there-in, and

Figure 7.7. (continued)

Let them give glory

Because of the brevity of the preceding chorus, the second “hortatory statement” occurs only seconds after the first in actual time. The style remains generally consistent between the two, partly because the phrase structure is the same (complete phrase, new phrase + prepositional phrase). Again, Thompson employs a held note with a crescendo to tie the second and third phrases together (fig. 7.8). While the earlier statement had a more consistent syllabic delivery, this one does feature two short melismas, which in a small way foreshadow the tempo that follows, the fastest in all of Part IV.

The text for the resulting praise chorus is only two phrases, which Thompson turns into A and B themes of a “scherzo-trio-scherzo, with a short coda drawn from the trio”²²⁷ The scherzo is in compound meter, to the text “Let the earth rejoice.” The scherzo theme grows out of the rhythm of the text, setting the weak syllables as anacrusis and the strong syllables as downbeats (fig. 7.9). The resulting rhythm is celebratory, like the text, whose affect is further enhanced by the strong upward leaps. The same octave leaps that Thompson employed for “break forth into singing” (fig. 7.7) he used in this chorus for

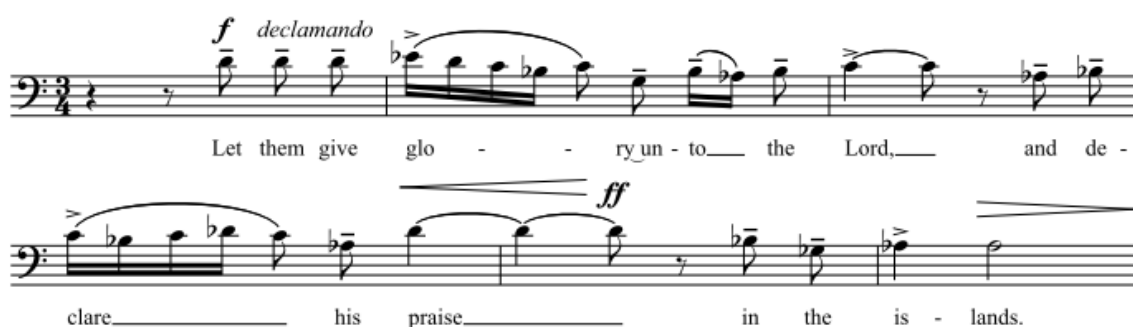


Figure 7.8. “Hortatory statement” from *Let them give glory*, measures 1-6.

²²⁷ Ibid., 43.

Allegro con brio (♩. = 66)

Chorus I

f *10*

Let the earth re - joice,

Let the earth re - joice,

Let the earth re - joice,

p *f* *10*

Let the earth re - joice,

Allegro con brio (♩. = 66)

Chorus II

f subito *10*

Let the earth re - joice, let the

f subito

Let the earth re - joice, let the

f subito

Let the earth re - joice, let the

(Tutti) *f subito*

Let the earth re - joice, let the

Allegro con brio (♩. = 66)

f subito *10*

p

Figure 7.9. *Let them give glory*, measures 7-11. “Scherzo” theme.

[illegible]

Figure 7.10. *Let them give glory*, measures 22-26. “Scherzo” theme, with hemiola, ornamentation, and meter change approaching the “trio.”

“rejoice.” The two choirs sing this theme antiphonally in a quasi-Baroque style, with increasing ornamentation, hemiola, and a transition to duple meter before the trio (fig. 7.10).

The text for the scherzo section spoke in more general terms, while the trio section sets the text most specific to this praise chorus: “Let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.” Thompson sought to differentiate the two, saying “the texture of the trio contrasts in every way with that of the scherzo.”²²⁸ He replaced the fast compound meter with a slow duple one, traded the scherzo’s D-flat major for its relative B-flat minor, and left the antiphonal texture to one he had not yet used in the whole *Requiem*: an eight-part canon. The canonic structure uses two simple yet flexible themes, one for harmonic support, the other for melody (fig. 7.11). Thompson allowed each voice part to transition between the two themes whenever necessary by extending the basic themes with extra phrases. For example, the basic harmonic theme can be seen in Alto II, measures 37-38, but is extended through the entire segment in Bass I with continual repetitions of “be glad thereof.” The melodic theme is clearly stated in Tenor II, measures 37-38, but in Soprano II, measures 39-41, it receives an extra “be glad thereof” also.

This is the first time in the *Requiem* where the entire ensemble is completely intertwined as an eight-part choir, not a double choir. To accentuate this unity, Thompson filled this section with canons between parts from both choirs, first in pairs, then in four-part canons.²²⁹ From a listener’s perspective, it would be difficult to distinguish the choirs from each other in this texture.

²²⁸ Ibid., 43.

²²⁹ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 43.

[illegible]

Figure 7.11. *Let them give glory*, measures 37-41. “Trio” theme, showing two distinct melodic figures, one in quarter-note pulses, and the other in eighth-note pulses.

Thompson again relied on the text for not only musical rhythm, but also affect. Each of the trio themes has metaphorical significance as well. The unending pulse of quarter-note chords is meant to resemble “the strumming of a big guitar,” and the many imitative entrances of eighth notes are “meant to convey an impression of the multitudinous isles.”²³⁰

The trio travels through several keys, all closely related to its beginning in B-flat minor, and it ends with a plagal cadence in that key. The scherzo returns in a form identical to its previous iteration, and closes with the three-measure coda based on the trio. Though the text and melody from the trio are imported, the affect remains much more like the scherzo sections: bold, accented, and homophonic (fig. 7.12). In this movement, like in “Lamentations,” Thompson draws affect and other musical material from the text he had chosen, but then placed those materials in a structure that was not governed by the text. For “Lamentations,” that structure was a broad ternary form, and here it was a clearly-defined scherzo-trio-scherzo.

Praise Him all ye stars of light

Thompson chose yet another form for the third “hortatory chorus” in *Praise Him all ye stars of light*. Again, Thompson used vocal color combinations that were uniquely possible in Part IV due to the unity between the choirs. For the large formal structure, this time Thompson composed three successive choruses of varying styles for each of the three praise statements.

The hortatory statement is in a similar style to the previous two, but does not have the same phrase structure that tied the previous two together. It is similar to the second

²³⁰ Ibid., 44.

Meno mosso, largamente

80 *rall.*

joice; let the mul-ti-tude of isles be glad there - of.

joice; let the isles be glad there - of.

joice; let the isles be glad there - of.

joice; let the isles be glad there - of.

Meno mosso, largamente

80 *rall.*

let the mul-ti-tude of isles be glad there - of.

joice; let the mul-ti-tude of isles be glad there - of.

joice; let the mul-ti-tude of isles be glad there - of.

joice; let the mul-ti-tude of isles be glad there - of.

Figure 7.12. *Let them give glory*, measures 78-81. “Trio” theme modified and used as coda material.

f

Praise Him, Praise Him, all ye stars of light. Let the

heav'n and earth praise Him.

rall. e dim. *p*

Figure 7.13. Hortatory statement from *Praise Him all ye stars of light*, measures 1-7.

statement, though, in its use of two brief melismas (fig. 7.13). In the previous exhortation, the fast melisma foreshadowed the chorus that followed, and the same is true in this movement. The slower, *legato* melismas introduce the general style of the music for “The morning stars.”

One vocal color that Thompson had not yet used in the *Requiem* was music exclusively for women’s or men’s voices, so he chose to do so in this movement to set the text from the book of Job: “The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” Each phrase of this passage is given its own treatment, the first with women’s voices alone. Thompson again provided a metaphorical description of this particular music: “The sustained high F’s in Sopranos I illustrate the word ‘stars’ and the humming in the three lower voices is to suggest the stars singing together—distant, undulating music of the spheres.”²³¹ Figure 7.14 shows the two motives of which he spoke. For this particular texture, Thompson drew on two techniques that can be seen in his other compositions, both before and after the *Requiem*. Thompson had used hummed eighth-note *ostinati* as early as 1930 to paint a musical background in the first movement of *Rosemary* (1930), which is also for women’s voices. Though the text-setting purpose of the *Rosemary* excerpt was not the same, it was treble-voice texture that he had explored before.

Above the undulating eighth notes, Thompson placed a “star,” represented with a high soprano note on that particular word. He used this same text-painting device most famously in *Frostiana* (1959), which was written a little more than a year after the *Requiem*. Thompson must have been satisfied with the “star” effect he had achieved

²³¹ Ibid., 44.

Molto lento (♩ = 54)

Soprano I *pp* 10
The morn - ing stars _____ sang to -

Soprano II *ppp*
Mm (humming) _____

Alto I *ppp*
Mm (humming) _____

Alto II *ppp*
Mm (humming) _____

15
geth - er, the morn - ing stars _____

Figure 7.14. *Praise Him all ye stars of light*, measures 9-16.

10 *pp*
O Star, _____

loft - i - ness the right. _____ To some ob - scur - i - ty of

loft - i - ness the right. _____ To some ob - scur - i - ty of

loft - i - ness the right. _____ To some ob - scur - i - ty of

Figure 7.15. *Frostiana*: “Choose something like a star,” measures 10-14 (version for SSAA).

in the *Requiem*, because he employed exactly the same device in *Choose something like a star*. For the first twenty-eight measures of that piece, the sopranos represent a star hanging in the sky above the other voices, by leaping an octave and holding a high D on the text “O star” (fig. 7.15).

The music that sets the corresponding phrase, “and all the sons of God shouted for joy,” is entirely different, and breaks in before the “music of the spheres” has fully receded. Thompson preserves the division between men’s and women’s choirs in this movement as well, having them sing as separate antiphonal choirs. The music is initially imitative, but the four men’s voice parts join in homophony to state the musical material specific to this text (fig. 7.16, mm. 24-28). The women respond with identical music an octave higher, and then both choirs (men’s/women’s) exchange rapid antiphonal phrases of “shouted for joy” in the same general style. Like the setting of “the morning stars,” this setting is brief, but its fanfare-like style and large dynamic contrast completely. Instead of receding like the previous movement, the intensity of the alternating phrases grows, leading towards the third phrase of text.

The musical score for measures 23-28, tenor and bass parts only, is presented in four staves. The time signature is 2/4, and the key signature is B-flat major. The lyrics are "and all the sons of God shout-ed for joy." The score shows the tenor and bass parts in homophony, with the tenors an octave higher than the basses. The music is characterized by a fanfare-like style with large dynamic contrast. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Figure 7.16. *Praise Him all ye stars of light*, measures 23-28, tenor and bass parts only.

Praise Him all ye stars of light is the final chorus in “The Garment of Praise,” so Thompson composed a building intensity into the music as a fitting close to the dramatic scene. The serene depiction of the stars led to a fanfare of “shouts for joy,” and the energy then culminates in the text “For they went at large like horses, and leaped like lambs, praising Thee, O Lord.” Thompson composed three different themes, one for each phrase in the text, and employed them each in various ways as the chorus was written. At most times the texture of the movement is antiphonal to keep forward momentum without pause, but even in this feature Thompson explored new techniques. Antiphony between the separate choirs was seen in both *Let everything that hath breath* and *Let them give glory*, and between the men’s and women’s sections earlier in this movement. In this final chorus of praise, however, Thompson used various combinations of five or more voices to create antiphonal choirs of many different vocal colors. He described the overall nature of this chorus: “The texture is predominantly one of *cori spezzati*, but the antiphony is produced by several different numbers and combinations of voices of contrasting timbres.”²³²

The first two-part phrase of text, “For they went at large like horses and leaped like lambs,” describe the joy shown by the Israelites after they crossed the Red Sea. As shown in the text analysis, singing was not sufficient for the Israelites, instead they jumped and danced, showing their praise physically. The musical themes that set these two sub-phrases similarly “jump” and “dance.” The “horses” theme sets the first phrase of text, and retains some of the same fanfare qualities of the preceding section and adds even more; dotted rhythms, heavy accents, upward leaps, and many voice parts are its

²³² Ibid., 43.

The musical score consists of four staves. The top three staves are for voices and the bottom staff is for bass. The lyrics are: "for they went at large like hors-es, and leap'd like lambs,". The top three staves have a piano (p) dynamic and the bottom staff has a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. The music is in 4/4 time and features a "leaping" figure in the top three voices and a background role in the bass.

Figure 7.18. *Praise Him all ye stars of light*, Choir II, measures 51-52. "And leaped like lambs" theme, used antiphonally between various combinations of voice parts throughout the movement.

more than half of the choir singing, and thus imbued this theme with extra density and power reflective of the text.

The complementary phrase "and leaped like lambs" has a contrasting musical material that accurately paints the text. When the Israelites are described as horses, they jump boldly with heavy accents, but as lambs they leap much more gently. The basic "lambs" theme has two parts: one voice sings staccato tonic and dominant pitches in quarter notes to produce a "leaping" figure (fig. 7.18, B. I and II); which is accompanied by two or more voices singing staccato eighth-note chords on the "horses" text in a background role (fig. 7.18, upper three voices).

The example in figure 7.18 shows the "lambs" as it first appears as an antiphonal subject, but Thompson later modified it to involve all of the voice parts simultaneously. He added and subtracted voice parts to each of its components, and extended it through repetition, imitation, and diminution. All of these changes are present in measures 59-61

60

pp went at large like hors-es, for they went, for they went at large like hors-es, for they - es, for they

pp went at large like hors-es, for they went, for they went at large like hors-es, for they - es, for they

pp went at large like hors-es, for they went, for they went at large like hors-es, for they - es, for they

60

f leap'd like lambs, prais-ing, leap'd like lambs, prais-ing, leap'd like lambs, prais-ing, and leap'd like lambs, prais-ing

f leap'd like lambs, prais-ing, leap'd like lambs, prais-ing, leap'd like lambs, prais-ing, and leap'd like lambs, prais-ing

f leap'd like lambs, prais-ing, leap'd like lambs, prais-ing, leap'd like lambs, prais-ing, and leap'd like lambs, prais-ing

f leap'd like lambs, prais-ing, leap'd like lambs, prais-ing, leap'd like lambs, prais-ing, and leap'd like lambs, prais-ing

Figure 7.19. Praise Him all ye stars of light, Choir II, measures 59-62.

(fig. 7.19), where they serve as a means of building intensity. The texture thickens in Choir I with addition of the tenor to the eighth-note ostinato, and Choir II involves all voice parts in imitation as “leaping lambs.” The “leaping” figure is the most important of the two, and Thompson builds the intensity of its repetitions by increasing the dynamic and having Choir II climb back up twice as fast as they descended (fig. 7.19, m. 61).

The dynamic increase shown in figure 7.19 occurs in the middle of the section to introduce the third theme, “Praising Thee, O Lord.” To give these five syllables added intensity, Thompson set them in the homophonic declamatory style he had used so many times before in the *Requiem*. He then accented and syncopated the initial “prai-“ syllable of “praising,” and placed “Thee” on the strongest beat in the series. Like the other two, it is used as an antiphonal theme early in the piece, but then is modified later to include more voice parts. It is also the theme with which Thompson creates the final coda of the movement. Thompson made one notable change to the text in this theme: in figure 7.20 the word “Lord” was replaced with “God” in both statements, a change that is unique only to this instance. It is possible that Thompson did this for an even greater dramatic effect in this first occurrence of that text, replacing the milder [l] sound with an explosive [g]. When it appears as the coda material, the rhythms are augmented and melismatic material is added to several voice parts (fig. 7.21).

If this final section is viewed as a separate chorus, its form is quite similar to *Sing unto him* in Part III. Thompson laid out several musical ideas and then repeated them in various tonalities, orders, and scorings. Additionally, in both cases Thompson kept the various themes distinct as he developed them; they were not combined with or superimposed on one another. In this chorus, there are a total of four instances of the

Choir II: Choir I:

lambs prais - ing Thee, O God. prais - ing Thee, O God.

prais - ing Thee, O God. prais - ing Thee, O God.

prais - ing Thee, O God. prais - ing Thee, O God.

prais - ing Thee, O God. prais - ing Thee, O God.

Figure 7.20. *Praise Him all ye stars of light*, measures 62-65 (the first measure of this figure overlaps with the last of Fig. 7.19).

went at large like hors - es, went at large like hors - es, prais - ing

went at large like hors - es, went at large like hors - es, prais - ing

went at large like hors - es, went at large like hors - es, prais - ing

went at large like hors - es, went at large like hors - es, prais - ing

lambs, for they went at large like hors - es, prais - ing

lambs, for they went at large like hors - es, prais - ing

lambs, for they went at large like hors - es, prais - ing

Figure 7.21. *Praise Him all ye stars of light*, measures 93-102 (closing twelve measures).

poco a poco rall.

Thee, prais - ing Thee, O Lord.

poco a poco rall.

Thee, O Lord, prais - ing Thee, O Lord.

poco a poco rall.

Thee, O Lord, prais - ing Thee, O Lord.

poco a poco rall.

Thee, O Lord prais - ing Thee, O Lord.

poco a poco rall.

Thee, O Lord, prais - ing Thee, O Lord.

poco a poco rall.

Thee, O Lord, prais - ing Thee, O Lord.

poco a poco rall.

Thee, prais - ing prais - ing Thee, O Lord.

Figure 7.21. (continued)

horses theme, five of the lambs theme, and three of the praising theme, and each time they are slightly different.

Thompson made it clear that the texture is “predominantly *cori spezzati*,” but the divisions that constitute the *spezzati* are different every time. Choirs I and II are used as separate entities for the first instances of both the “lambs” theme and the “praising” theme (figs. 7.19 and 7.20, respectively). Thompson also divided the choirs again in higher and lower voices, as they were “The morning stars...” and “all the sons of God...”

earlier in the movement. The greatest variety of timbres is shown in the many statements of the “horses” theme. Though each of the three themes is used primarily as an antiphonal subject, all three themes are stated in eight voices at some point. An example of the “lambs” theme involving seven voices was shown in figure 7.20, and it employs all eight in three similar episodes later. The other two themes use all voices only once during the climactic ending, shown in figure 7.21.

I am their music

Three choruses of praise of increasing intensity are then answered with a movement that mirrors the first. The music is divided in two sections, one for each choir, corresponding to their separate texts. In the music for Choir I, Thompson recalls themes from earlier in the *Requiem*, and for Choir II the music that opened “The Garment of Praise.”

“The faithful have indeed triumphed. In hushed tones they sing ‘I am their music, and now I am their song.’”²³⁴ This text is summative in that it states that the goal of the entire work has been accomplished: the mourners have been comforted through an act of praise. If the deeper interpretation of these phrases is taken, as described in the text analysis, the mourners are not only comforted, they are now eternally saved as well.

Because this moment is a fulfillment of the cumulative message that Choir I has communicated from the beginning, Thompson makes it musically cumulative as well by setting the text to with the principle positive themes from Part II: the eternal God theme and the life motive, seen in their original form in figure 5.13 on page 127. The preceding analyses have identified multiple instances of these two motives in Parts II-IV, but most of those references are either melodic only (e.g. fig. 7.5) or in a different texture (e.g. fig.

²³⁴ Ibid., 44.

5.17, p. 133). In *I am their music* the reference is quite clear, having been modified only slightly for text alignment while retaining the same general mood and texture as the original (fig. 7.22). The melismatic life motive was used three times in Part II for the words “everlasting,” “life,” and “alive.” Thompson connected those ideas to the act of praise by using it here to set the word “song,” and also continued his use of melismas for the words “song” and “sing” in the *Requiem*. One of the primary features of the life motive is its potential to modulate, and in this case Thompson used the theme itself and two cadential extensions (fig. 7.22, mm. 10-13) to travel from F minor (F major had closed the previous movement) to A-flat major, setting a tonal stage for Choir II’s entry.

The characters played by Choir II have been dramatically changed from their emotional state at the beginning of the *Requiem*, and have been convinced by the message delivered by Choir I. To illustrate this change, Thompson abandons all contrasts between the choirs and has Choir II literally sing Choir I’s song from the beginning of “The Garment of Praise”. Not only does this mirroring help unify Part IV, it is symbolic of the entire drama up to this point. The music from *Sing with the Spirit* returns almost identically, but with one important dramatic change. In the first movement of Part IV, Choir II echoed Choir I for each of the statements, but here, Choir II is again divided into two sub-choirs (as in “Lamentations”), and delivers the same theme entirely on their own. The messages of comfort, praise, and faith have been completely transferred from the souls of the faithful to the mourners.

For this recapitulation, Thompson made only minor changes to the music in order to fit the text rhythms. There is significantly more text in this instance: “I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, till he fill thy mouth with laughing and thy lips with

SOPRANO *ppp*
I am their mu - sic, and now am I their

ALTO
I am their mu - sic, and now am I their

TENOR
I am their mu - sic, and now am I their

BASS
I am their mu - sic, and now am I their

5 *poco accel.* *mf* *poco rall.*
S. song. their
A. song. their
T. song. their
B. song. their

9 *p* *pp* *ppp*
S. song, their song, their song.
A. song, their song, their song.
T. song, their song, their song.
B. song, their song, their song.

Figure 7.22. *I am their music*, Choir I, measures 1-13. Direct quote and extension of the eternal God theme from Part II.

rejoicing.” Thompson dealt with that fact by eliminating the text repetitions and having the final echo use the last two phrases of text simultaneously (“till He fill thy mouth with laughing”/ “and thy lips with rejoicing”). The final chord is voiced in eight parts, with Choir IIa voices directly above their IIb counterparts (fig. 7.23).

The musical score for Choirs IIa and IIb, measures 12-16, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 12-14) shows four staves for Choir IIa and four staves for Choir IIb. The lyrics are "I will praise the Lord". The second system (measures 15-16) shows four staves for Choir IIa and four staves for Choir IIb. The lyrics are "Lord with my". The music is marked *ppp* (pianissimo) and includes a *del precedente* instruction. The final chord is voiced in eight parts, with Choir IIa voices directly above their IIb counterparts.

Figure 7.23. *I am their music*, Choirs IIa and IIb, measures 12-16. Direct quote of *Sing with the Spirit*, only in Choirs IIa and IIb rather than Choirs I and II.

Meno mosso

30

Meno mosso *rall.* 30

lips _____ with re - joic - ing. re - joic - ing. _____

lips _____ with re - joic - ing. re - joic - ing. _____

lips _____ with re - joic - ing. re - joic - ing. _____

lips _____ with re - joic - ing. re - joic - ing. _____

Meno mosso *rall.* 30

with laugh - ing. _____

with laugh - ing. _____

laugh - ing. _____ with laugh - ing. _____

laugh - ing. _____ with laugh - ing. _____

Figure 7.24. *I am their music*, measures 27-30.

The Garment of Praise: Performance Considerations

Overall

In all of the preceding sections of the *Requiem*, it was dramatically important to emphasize the contrast between the characters of the two choirs. Tone quality, articulation, dynamics, and tempo all needed to be observed and emphasized for appropriate dramatic effect. In “The Garment of Praise,” the two choirs are finally singing the same music, and thus all of the contrasts between their performance are removed by Thompson to emphasize their unity of purpose.

The choirs should sing in similar styles even as multiple styles are called for in the various movements of “The Garment of Praise.” The outer movements have a similar musical affect distinct from the praise movements in the middle, and should reflect each other with their serene, quiet atmosphere. Within the praise choruses, multiple affects—from tranquil to jubilant—are called for by the texts and the variety of compositional techniques that set them. Over the course of the three praise choruses, intensity grows in the text through the increasingly universal calls to praise, a fact that is reflected in their musical settings with increasing complexity of double-chorus techniques. Any interpretation of “The Garment of Praise” should recognize this progression.

Finally, in an overview of the entire Part IV, it must be remembered that Thompson put as much variety in his settings as the text would allow. He varied timbres with several different voice combinations, used a broad range of dynamics, and indicated a wide variety of articulations over the course of this section. Any choir performing “The Garment of Praise,” either as part of the *Requiem* or as an extraction, should display the interpretive agility necessary to reproduce all that Thompson indicated.

Parts II and III had more staging opportunities than Part IV due to their subject matter and “debating” characters, but there are still some to be suggested for this movement. The three “hortatory statements” place all of the attention on the baritones of Choir I, and as their role is to instruct the rest of the singers, it would be appropriate for the remaining singers to turn their focus towards the baritones during those phrases. This physical turning offers another staging possibility when the focus again turns out. In both *Let everything that hath breath* and *Let them give glory*, Choir II is the first to introduce the chorus of praise, and could turn back outward to sing as if they were suddenly inspired. Choir I takes up the song that Choir II begins each time, and could delay their shift of focus outward until they join in the song.

Sing with the spirit

Thompson described this movement as a “responsive prayer,” emphasized by the indication *Lento e devoto* at the beginning.²³⁵ Since the music for the two choirs is the same in mood and nearly identical in content, the opportunity for the choirs to show their unity of sound quality occurs immediately. In a prayerful mode, the tone quality should be soft, rounded, and be as well-blended as possible.

Thompson was serious about the dynamic of this movement remaining soft, indicating *pianissimo* at the beginning of each of the first five phrases, even though no change in dynamic had occurred (fig. 7.2). These “reminder” dynamics are likely the result of the musical lines themselves, which by their shape encourage a phrasing that swells and recedes. Reminding each voice part of the dynamic guards against each line not receding completely, a dynamic trend that would build on itself with each successive entry.

²³⁵ Ibid., 43.

The dynamic pinnacle of the movement is reached in measures 9 and 10, during the short “with the spirit” phrases. Both phrases contain large upward leaps in the soprano parts, which must be carefully and gently sung so as to not rise unexpectedly out of the texture. There is no break in the antiphonal structure, so the entire movement can and should be delivered as one constant flow of sound. None of the choral entries should be surprising or draw attention to themselves, but rather enter and exit the texture gracefully. To that end, each phrase ends with either the [t] of “spirit” or the [ŋ] of “understanding,” and both should be deemphasized to stay underneath the phrase that has already overtaken them.

Let everything that hath breath

The mood changes completely as the praise choruses begin. Thompson indicated *fortissimo* for the first hortatory statements, which would be a stark contrast from the *pianississimo* that ended the previous movement. In the musical analysis it was clear that though the hortatory phrases were similar to each other, they each foreshadowed the choruses that followed them. This first phrase is unique in its two parts, the first one echoed by the assembled choirs and the second leading to the praise chorus “break forth into singing.”

The significance of this opening call, “Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord,” cannot be underestimated. Prior to this moment in the *Requiem*, the choirs had only sung *fortissimo* together at the ends of some climactic movements, and arrived at those large dynamics gradually. At this moment, the audience hears the full volume of the unified choirs for the first time in bold declamation, immediately after a subdued, tender movement. The tone of the choir should shift suddenly to vibrant and colorful, with clear



Figure 7.25. *Let everything that hath breath*, B. I, measures 1-4.



Figure 7.26. *Let everything that hath breath*, B. II, measures 14-17.

exploded consonants. Thompson desired this crispness of diction, indicating an exploded [d] to end the phrase by tying a staccato eighth note to the end of the phrase (fig. 7.25).

For the brief chorus concerning the mountains, forests, and trees, Thompson made it clear that a light staccato delivery was important, marking nearly every syllabic eighth note with a staccato marking. The section is wisely marked only *forte* at the beginning, since the increased heaviness that a stronger dynamic brings would rob the theme of its dance-like quality and limit the briskness of the tempo. When Thompson increased the dynamic to *fortissimo* at the ending, he both removed the staccato markings and decreased the tempo. The most significant musical challenge of this movement is represented by the large leaps in the soprano and bass parts. With the fast tempo indicated, the bass lines especially require lightness and agility to perform them accurately (fig. 7.26). Because staccato is indicated throughout, notes must settle immediately, so rehearsing at a slower tempo first will be necessary to solidify all of the pitches, particularly the wide leaps. Once the pitches and rhythms are established, the tempo should be increased to the indicated tempo (dotted-quarter note = 80) so that the pulse is clearly felt at the dotted-quarter note level.

Let them give glory

The second of the “hortatory statements” is in a slightly different mood, and Thompson indicated that immediately by allowing a flexible tempo with *senza rigore* at the beginning. With tempo flexibility increased, the line becomes more difficult to unify among an entire section of baritones, and will thus need to be rehearsed the same way each time in order to unify them as a single voice.

The ternary chorus that follows has great contrast between its A and B sections. The A section has a compound meter like the previous chorus, but must contrast with it by being performed at a slightly slower tempo and with less staccato. Whereas the staccato markings in the previous movement were pervasive, those indicated in this movement are placed on each anacrusis to enhance the downbeat accents (fig. 7.9). Text stress is also important, especially the final-syllable accent in “re-joice,” which is placed in the music in a way that both emphasizes the compound meter feeling and the subsequent hemiolas (fig. 7.10). Thompson’s many articulation markings again support all of this, and will solve many interpretive challenges if properly observed.

Creating the “multitude of isles” is the next challenge. Again, Thompson used several words to describe the musical affect he desired: “con lietezza, leggerissimo, e senza crescendo” (with gladness, a lot of lightness, and without crescendo). On every entering vocal line, he also placed the words *semi-staccato*, and as voices transition between the background lines and the canonic theme, they are marked *pianissimo* and *p*, respectively. With all of those indications together, several suggestions present themselves. Every line should be delivered with slight detachment without clipping any note too short, and the melodic themes should rise slightly out of the texture when they

arrive. This is why the *senza crescendo* marking is so important, as the section progresses, canons are heard with increasing frequency and could easily transfer into an intensifying dynamic. Instead, Thompson wanted this section to remain relatively static. From a conductor's point of view, the most challenging feature of this section is the many static phrases of repeated pitches that constitute the background theme—without continual re-energizing from the singers the intonation could easily suffer. Recognizing that challenge and encouraging the semi-staccato articulation will help alleviate the problem.

The recapitulation offers no musical challenges different from those already observed, but the coda provides a new challenge. At *Meno mosso, largamente* (less motion, broadly), it may be tempting to both slow the tempo and crescendo too much for the final cadence (fig. 7.12). This still must be viewed in its context as the second of three choruses, so the grandest *allargando* ending must be withheld until the next movement.

Praise Him all ye stars of light

While the two previous hortatory statements required slight adjustments as they approached their choruses, this third statement must introduce a far different musical environment. “The morning stars” music that follows is serene and incredibly soft, a quality that Thompson foreshadows with his indication *rallentando e diminuendo* at the end of the preceding hortatory statement (fig. 7.13). The beginning of the hortatory statement should remain similar to the others to magnify this change in mood when it happens.

The music of “the morning stars” is simple, but achieving this simplicity is a challenging task. The humming portions are in middle range and soft, so they are not too

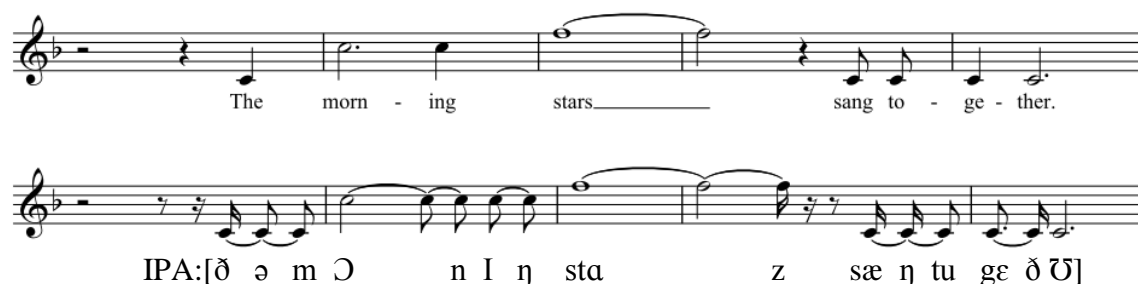


Figure 7.27. Phonetic and rhythmic transcription of possible performance of *Praise Him all ye stars of light*, S. I, measures 9-13.

difficult, but they must accompany a soprano line that must sound stable and effortless, with excellent intonation. To that end, this is a moment where it may be practical to redistribute singers among voice parts slightly so that the group of sopranos representing the stars can sound like a single pure voice. Soprano voices with competing or wide vibratos, strident tone qualities, or an inability to sing high at a soft dynamic could be transferred to other parts to improve the clarity of this single line. Once the voices have been carefully chosen, precise diction will help the line sound effortless. For emphasis, hummed consonants could receive rhythmic value and precede the beat so that full vowels appear directly on the beat. For example, the [m] of “morning” could occur for an eighth-note preceding the word, on the lower pitch, so that the [ɔ] sound appears on the beat. A phonetic transcription of one possible way the line could be performed for maximum effect appears in figure 7.28. Precise diction is always important in choral music, but in this especially exposed moment it is key to producing the serene affect of this episode.


When the second theme arrives suddenly, the mood it brings must contrast completely with what came before (see fig. 7.17). The dynamic need not go beyond the indicated *forte*, but Thompson again marks a specific degree of accent on every note in

the segment. For each of the imitative entries, the held pitches must recede slightly to make room for the next entry, particularly because the first entry is in the highest voice (T. I, then S. I). Beyond that, the texture of this episode is fairly stable, and can be viewed as an introduction to the “horses” music that follows. In that context, the dynamic should remain moderate until just before the entrance of the new theme.

Thompson used articulations and dynamic markings to indicate his interpretation of the three themes in this closing section. The “horses” theme is accented on strong syllables and drives toward the end of the phrase, where the word “horses” is consistently marked *staccatissimo*. Special attention should be paid to the various voice parts that have the octave leaps, since the voicing changes each time and this is the most distinctive melodic feature of the theme. Singers should also be aware of how their parts fit into each voicing—at times it is a tenor part that is providing the lowest foundation or an alto part that is acting as the highest voice.


The “lambs” theme has a couple of important functions when it appears. It always enters at a reduced dynamic than the preceding music, and then it subsequently builds towards *fortissimo* to introduce the next theme. For its intensity-building effect to have the greatest impact, the soft dynamics must be observed. As far as singing the elements of the theme themselves, Thompson wanted the new text “and leaped like lambs” to be most prominent, in every instance marking the voices with that text at a higher dynamic than the background. Communicating that text is a challenge, due to the staccato articulation and wide leaps. One possible solution is to give all of the staccato notes an exact rhythmic duration to align all of the consonants. When singing staccato, one technique used to make text more intelligible is to attach final consonants of previous words to the

A




And leap'd like lambs

B



IPA:[æ ndl i ptl ɑ jkl æ mz]

C



IPA:[æ n də l i pt l ɑ jk l æ mz]

Figure 7.27. Phonetic and rhythmic transcription of possible performances of “and leaped like lambs.”

beginnings of the following words, but that would not work well in this case because of the initial [l] on three of the words. The [l] requires time to sound, and attaching plosive consonants before it is unnecessarily difficult and in this specific case forms new words that would change the meaning entirely. Instead, each ending consonant could follow its vowel sound exactly on the next eighth-note pulse, leaving a small space before the next [l]. These two options are illustrated in figure 7.29. Example B connects ending consonants to following initial vowels, which becomes nearly unintelligible, and creates the word “clams” at the end of the line. Example C separates ending consonants from the [l]s that follow, and maximizes the intelligibility of the text.

The third theme in this section, on “Praising Thee, O Lord,” has more inherent phrase shape than the other two themes because of its stepwise motion. Thompson placed the word “Thee” in the strongest metrical position in every instance, so the “O Lord (or God)” phrase should recede slightly as it continues. The most characteristic feature that should be emphasized in performance, though, is the syncopated entry on the word “praising.” The [pr] that begins the word should be explosive and accented each time,

especially the last time, when after a silence all eight voices sing “praising” at the same time to as they begin the final cadence in the final chorus of praise (fig. 7.22, m. 96).

I am their music

The opening and closing movements of Part IV have the much of the same musical material, so the performance approach should be the same: an underlying mood of prayerfulness with a well-balanced, very soft, and rounded tone color in the voices. All of these descriptors still apply, but in this movement the choirs are not showing their unity of sound as they did before, since in this movement Choir I remains silent as Choir II sings the double-choir music by itself.

Choir I opens with the “everlasting God” and life motives imported from Part II. That particular moment in Part II has a similar purpose and context—the theme is introduced at a *pianississimo* dynamic immediately after a climactic *fortissimo* event. The serenity of the theme must contrast completely with what came before. Thompson wrote this theme in an even more subdued way than he did in Part II: in *I am their music* the entire passage is a major third lower and at its height crescendos only to *mezzo forte* rather than *forte*. Consequently, Choir I should approach this segment with even more gentleness than before. Their emotion is different this time as well. In the previous reference, they were in the midst of debating immortality with Choir II, but here they have triumphed. Before they were contrasting their sure belief with Choir II’s distressed cries, whereas in Part IV they are reflecting on the salvation of their loved ones with satisfaction. When this change in dramatic context is coupled with Thompson’s more subtle musical treatment of the themes here in Part IV (softer dynamics, slower tempo), Choir I is given a more personal and delicate affect in this passage.

The music from the first movement of Part IV returns, but only at half-strength because it is only sung by one of the two choirs. Not only does this match the dramatic purpose of this moment—the message of Choir I being fully accepted by Choir II—Thompson also intended it to be more subtle overall. He admitted that this intention was not always realized: “The delicacy of the whole reprise is meant to be enhanced by being sung by Chorus II alone, divided (as in Part I) into eight parts, but (in performance) all hands generally prefer to join in.”²³⁶ Having Choir I join Choir II (rather than dividing Choir II) for this moment makes sense especially when “The Garment of Praise” is performed as a separate work, otherwise it appears as a large work that ends with only half of the choir singing. Without the broader context of the *Requiem*, dividing Choir II for this section is an unnecessary complication.

Summary

“The Garment of Praise” is the fulfillment of Choir II’s decision to praise God, a decision they made at the end of Part III. The text is constructed with opening and closing scenes that invite and then reflect on the praising itself. Between the outer sections is the actual “garment of praise,” which consists of three pairs of “hortatory statements” and corresponding choruses of praise. Each statement refers to a different manifestation of praise: first, the mountains, forests, and trees; second, the distant multitude of isles; and third, the stars, which expands to include the entire heavens and earth. When seen together, the praising begins locally and gradually spreads to fill the entire universe.

Thompson’s musical setting of this text reflected the overall mood of each phrase of text with various themes, tied certain texts together, and placed each of the themes within larger formal structures. The large forms did not necessarily grow out of the

²³⁶ Ibid., 45.

specific text structures, but were rather outgrowths of sound compositional practices and good dramatic pacing. The first and last movements were given nearly identical music to tie them together, but a theme from Part II was added to the last movement to show the effect of Choir I's message of "eternal life" given to Choir II. The three hortatory statements were stylistically similar, but also had some stylistic features of the choruses they introduced. The praise choruses themselves featured pictorial musical representations of some of the elements of praise: hunting horns in the forest, multitudinous islands rising up from the sea, stars and "music of the spheres" undulating in the distance, and finally the bounding of horses and leaping of lambs. In assembling the themes into movements, Thompson drew on a large variety of vocal color combinations that were not available to him in the previous sections for dramatic reasons.

As in Parts I-III, Thompson's indications of articulation, expression, and dynamics in "The Garment of Praise" are plentiful and guide the interpretation brilliantly. Maintaining contrast between the two choirs is not an issue in Part IV as it was previously, because the choirs are operating as a single unit with unified purpose. "The Garment of Praise" works well as an extracted work, and if performed that way, it is wholly appropriate to have both choirs sing the ending portion, rather than dividing Choir II. The style of Part IV is consistent with the rest of the *Requiem*, showing Thompson as a superb craftsman who uses simple themes drawn from the text, but assembles them into an effective piece of dramatic music.

Chapter 8: Part V, “The Leave-taking”

The Leave-taking: The Text

With all of the major conflicts resolved in the drama, the final part of Thompson’s *Requiem* sees the souls of the faithful returning to their rest. The drama opened with a chorus of mourners grieving over the loss of their loved ones, but they were eventually convinced that eternal life exists, and that by praising God they will be comforted. After repeated calls from the faithful for them to sing, the mourners put on the “garment of praise” and were changed. All that remains for the drama to be complete is for the characters to return to their rightful places. Thompson himself compared the dramatic structure of the *Requiem* to an Elizabethan tragedy. The fifth act of an Elizabethan tragedy often contains the tragic death of one, several, or even all of the main characters, but in Thompson’s drama the death occurs without tears. The souls of the faithful return to heaven and their loved ones stay behind, but an eventual joyous reunion is foreshadowed in one final “Alleluia, amen” that they sing together.

V: The Leave-taking

Ye were sometimes darkness

Choirs I and II

Ye were sometimes darkness,
but now are ye light in the Lord:
walk as children of light
(Ephesians 5:8)

*The Lord shall be unto thee*Choir IChoir II

The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light,
 and thy God thy glory.
 (Isaiah 60:19)

Return unto thy rest

Return unto thy rest, O my soul;
 for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.
 Return unto thy rest, O my soul.
 (Psalm 116:7)

Thou hast given him

Thou hast given him his heart's desire,
 and hast not withholden the request of his lips.
 He asked life of thee,
 and thou gavest him a long life:
 Even for ever and ever
 (Psalm 21:2, 1 – from the Book of Common Prayer)

Amen and amen, alleluia

Alleluia

Amen and amen, alleluia
 (Psalm 89:52)

Ye were sometimes darkness

In the text analysis for Part IV, it was suggested that the mourners had received more than comfort through their act of praise, that they had actually become Christians as well and could look forward to joining the souls of the faithful in eternity. It was unclear in looking at the text of Part IV alone whether or not that was a reasonable inference to draw, but the text of Part V confirms this interpretation. Of its five movements, Part V contains two choruses that involve both choirs: the first and the last. *Ye were sometimes*

darkness is the last chorus that the choirs sing together before Choir I departs, so its message is important for understanding the spiritual condition of the mourners.

The text for *Ye were sometimes darkness* comes from the instructions to the Ephesians about how they should live after becoming Christians. In the passage, the apostle Paul speaks metaphorically of unsaved people as “darkness” and those who know Christ as “light.” The people he describes are not simply “in” either darkness or light, they “are” darkness or light. By using this text for both choirs, Thompson drew an equivalence between the spiritual conditions of the faithful and the mourners—they had both been transformed from darkness to light. Paul’s message for the Ephesians using this metaphor extends for thirty-seven verses, but Thompson chose the one verse that summarizes it all: “Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: Walk as children of light.” The final phrase is a response to the situation described by the first two phrases.

The Lord shall be unto thee/Return unto thy rest/Thou hast given him

The middle three choruses of Part V are all brief statements given by the choirs individually. In the first, the mourners address the souls for the last time, and in the second the souls actively depart. The third statement shows Choir II addressing God directly for the first time since Part II.

The Lord shall be unto thee is the last statement from Choir II directed toward Choir I, and it shows their belief in the immortality of the souls. Thompson chose an Old Testament parallel to the Ephesians text in the previous movement, with a passage from Isaiah that referred to God being an “everlasting light” for the Israelites. The surrounding

chapter (Isaiah 60) describes the future glory of Zion, using the metaphors of darkness and light frequently.

Instead of responding to the statement of the mourners, Choir I's last chorus is directed inwardly. They tell their own souls to "Return unto thy rest," in the comfort that "the Lord hath dealt bountifully" with them. In context, the words come from David, quieting his own soul after God saved him. David speaks of freedom from anxiousness and sorrow for his soul. The souls of the faithful in Choir I use David's words to speak of a different kind of rest for their souls. Instead of being comforted and remaining alive on earth, this text sees the souls leaving earth for the last time.

With the souls gone, Choir II has only one statement remaining. The last time the mourners spoke a phrase of text directed specifically toward God was during the debate on immortality during Part II, when they asked "How long, Lord... shall thy wrath burn like fire?" Having been changed spiritually by the events of Parts III and IV, their mood changes completely. In this brief text, they thank God for the long life granted to their loved ones, a response to death entirely opposite the one with which they began in "Lamentations." Drawn from another psalm of David, this passage has a slightly different message in its context than it does in the *Requiem*, showing Thompson to continue his practice of giving scriptural text fresh context. Rather than thanking God for the life of someone who is now dead, David speaks in the third person, thanking God for granting his own request for a long life. His "heart's desire" is the life itself, which he wrote of after being spared in battle. Choir II appropriates the many "he" pronouns not for themselves (as David did), but rather for their departed loved ones. As a fitting

conclusion to the principal text of the *Requiem*, this was the first excerpt that Thompson found in his search for elegiac prose before the idea of the *Requiem* existed.

Amen and amen, alleluia

The text of the final movement contains no more than the three words in the title, but Thompson still distributed the text between the choirs. Choir II sings “Amen and amen” for almost the entire movement, joining in “alleluia” only briefly, while Choir I sings only “alleluia.” At this point in the drama, the souls are in heaven and the mourners remain on earth, so they have different messages to deliver. In saying “Amen and amen,” Choir II announces “so be it” and thus ends the story, remaining on earth. The departed souls, however, live immortal in heaven and have only one word to say, “alleluia.”

The source for the text “Amen and amen” was a symbolic one. Thompson could have drawn those words from multiple sources in scripture, but chose to take it from the last verse of Psalm 89. Choir II used texts from Psalm 89 twice, for both their first and last statements in the debate on immortality in Part II. The previous references were the most desperate of all the texts taken from the Psalms: “What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?” and “How long Lord...shall thy wrath burn like fire?” By using the end of this same chapter to close the *Requiem*, Thompson completed the negative texts with their positive counterpart, allowing Choir II to come to the same conclusion that the psalmist did: “Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen and amen.” (Psalm 89:52).

The Leave-taking: Musical Setting

Ye were sometimes darkness

To begin the fifth and last part of the *Requiem*, Thompson took a brief, simple text and turned it into a large movement with a broad three-part structure. In several

ways, *Ye were sometimes darkness* is the resolved, positive parallel of “Lamentations.” Instead of great contrast between the two characters, there is now unity, and the choirs sing another movement “organized on large dimensions.”²³⁷ The text analysis showed this movement to have a brief text with a single message: “walk as children of light.” Thompson uses the first two phrases of text for an introduction to the movement, and “walk as children of light” for the rest, or the “movement proper” as he described it.²³⁸ For the first two phrases—one referring to “darkness,” the other to “light”—Thompson wrote two contrasting themes that reflected their subject matter, and for the “walking” text he wrote a march. First, the analysis will focus on the musical setting of each phrase of text, and second, on their placement in the broader formal structure of the movement.

Musical themes

The “darkness” theme begins in C minor and is nine measures in length. The first twelve measures of the introduction are seen in figure 8.1, which includes both the “darkness” and “light” themes. Thompson wrote that “darkness is suggested by use of the voices’ lower registers and by the succession of no less than ten cross-relations in measures 3-7.”²³⁹ The basses do not have a particularly low *tessitura*, but Thompson’s close spacing of the chords lead to low pitches for the upper voices. Thompson also used thirds between the bass and tenor voices, as he did to add darkness to the end of *Why make ye this ado?* from Part II. To ensure a constant stream of thirds between bass and tenor, Thompson set all chords in this theme except the very first and last in first inversion. First-inversion triads have the added benefit of sounding less stable than triads in root

²³⁷ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 45.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 45.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 45.

position, and less active than second-inversion ones, making them an excellent choice for painting “darkness.” The word “darkness” is sung repeatedly by the soprano and echoed by the lower three voices, climbing with a string of appoggiaturas, then falling stepwise to the dominant. The entire scene is further weakened by the placement of the unsupported soprano appoggiaturas on downbeats, leaving each strong beat empty except for a single active pitch. With all of these techniques together—cross-relations, low *tessitura*, thirds between bass and tenor, first-inversion triads, and unsupported appoggiaturas on downbeats—Thompson was able to effectively paint an image of “darkness” in only nine measures.

The image displays a musical score for a choir, specifically for the first part of the song "Ye were sometimes darkness." The score is written for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The tempo and mood are indicated as "Lento e cupo (♩ = 56)". The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The Soprano part begins with a *pp legato* marking and features a series of appoggiaturas on downbeats. The lyrics for the Soprano are: "Ye were some-times dark - ness, some - times dark - ness, some - times". The Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts enter with a *pp legato* marking and echo the Soprano's melody. The lyrics for these parts are: "Ye were some-times dark - ness, some - times dark - ness, some - times". Below the vocal staves, the Chorus I part is shown, consisting of four staves. The lyrics for the Chorus are: "dark - ness, dark - ness, dark - ness, dark - - -", "some - times dark - ness, dark - ness, dark - ness, dark - - -", "some - times dark - ness, dark - ness, dark - ness, dark - - -", and "some - times dark - ness, dark - ness, dark - ness, dark - - -". The Chorus part includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *mp*, and *dim.*, and a fermata over the final measure.

Figure 8.1. *Ye were sometimes darkness*, Choir I, measures 1-12.

L'istesso tempo, ma chiaro

ness, but now are ye light in the Lord.

ness, but now are ye light in the

ness, but now are ye light in

ness, but now are ye light in the

Lento e cupo

Lord.

the Lord.

Lord.

Figure 8.1. (continued)

The tone color changes completely with the antithesis ‘but now are ye light in the Lord.’—a further instance of seeking to match musical and textual rhetoric.”²⁴⁰ In only three measures (mm. 10-12), Thompson contrasted light with the darkness in several ways. First, he started the voices on a unison pitch before the sopranos climb to their highest apex yet on beat 3 of measure 10, accompanying them with contrary motion rather than the strictly parallel motion of the “darkness” theme. Second, as soon as the

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 45.

8.2. In measure 26, the sopranos of Choir I sing the text with its most basic melodic setting: a simple rise and fall of a third. In this instance, the melody ends with a leap upward, but it can also be ended with a step upward (A. I, m. 28), step downward (A. II/T. II, m. 29), or a different leap depending on the needs of the music. There is also one common embellishment: an appoggiatura on “chil-“ (A. I/A. II, m. 28-29). This basic melody is often accompanied by at least one pedal on either the word “walk” or “light”

Andante, come una marcia lenta (♩ = 66) (in 2)

The musical score consists of four systems of four staves each. The tempo is Andante, come una marcia lenta (♩ = 66) (in 2). The first system includes a rehearsal mark 30. Dynamics include *p* and *pp*. The lyrics are: "walk as chil - dren, walk as children, walk, walk as", "walk as chil - dren of light, walk as chil - dren, walk as children, walk, walk as", "chil - dren of light, walk as chil - dren, walk as children, walk as", and "Walk as chil - dren, walk, walk as chil - dren, walk as chil - dren, walk." The second system continues the lyrics: "Walk as chil - dren, walk as children, walk, walk as", "light, walk as chil - dren of light, as chil - dren", "chil - dren of light, walk as chil - dren, walk as chil - dren, as", and "light, walk as chil - dren, walk as chil - dren, walk as chil - dren."

Figure 8.2. (continued)

35 (pp)

chil - dren of light, _____ of light, _____ of

chil - dren of light. Walk as chil - dren of light.

chil - dren of light. Walk as chil - dren of light.

walk as chil - dren, walk _____ as chil - dren,

chil - dren of light, _____ of light, _____

of light. _____ Walk as chil - dren of

chil - dren of light. _____ Walk as chil - dren of

Walk as chil - dren, walk,

Figure 8.2. (continued)

(S. I, m. 28; S. I/B. I, m. 34), and is typically sung in thirds (A. II/T. II, m. 29; S. II/T. II, m. 33). The pedal tones are almost always on the dominant pitch of the prevailing tonal center, which in measure 28 is C (S. I pedal on G) and in measure 34 is G (S. I/S. II pedals on D). The second theme is staccato, and features either upper neighbors or full octave leaps (S. I/A. I, m. 29-31). Thompson used this theme imitatively, often with pairs of voices in thirds (T. I/B. I, m. 31). Lastly, the eighth-note pulses stop occasionally and several voices join for a brief mixolydian passage that Thompson uses either for color or modulation (m. 33).

All of the elements described above are combined in a consistent structure that resembles measures 26-33: a series of basic melody settings, followed by imitative staccato motives, and ending with a brief mixolydian passage. Measures 34-41 are constructed the same way, only in the key of the dominant. Together, the themes are meant to represent the “walking children,” a feeling that is communicated with steady pulses at the quarter-note level, emphasized by staccato eighth notes.²⁴¹ While the smaller note values are “walking,” there are supported by constant pedal tones to represent “light.” When the pedal tones are approached by an octave leap, as they often are, they refer back to the depiction of stars in *Praise Him all ye stars of light*. In several places, the two soprano sections alternate singing the pedal above the rest of the voices, creating a constant stream of “light” (seen briefly in fig. 8.2, mm. 34-35).

The other consistent settings of this text are found in what Thompson refers to as the three “episodes” in the movement.²⁴² They are built with some of the same basic melodies outlined previously, but build to a climax of new material, seen in figure 8.3. These three climaxes are the only moments where there is an adjustment of tempo, even though the “walking” quarter-note pulses are still present in the Choir II bass part. The shape of the climax material, with its staggered parallel descent of seventh chords, is reminiscent of Theme 2 from “Lamentations,” particularly in the way the sopranos’ descent is embellished by lower neighbor tones. The outer voicing of the climactic chord in measure 48 matches that of the first instance of Theme 2 in measure 13 of

²⁴¹ Ibid., 46. Thompson said the “whole movement is pictorial,” and mentioned specifically that the eighth note pulses during the coda are meant to represent a “procession of children.”

²⁴² Ibid., 45.

[illegible]

Figure 8.3. *Ye were sometimes darkness, measures 46-52.*

“Lamentations:” a seventh chord with root E and a G in the soprano. However, in this later movement, the feeling of lament has been replaced with joy: Choir I has joined Choir II; the meter is duple, not triple; the climax is approached by step, not leap; and most importantly, the dark [o] of “mourning” has been replaced with the [a I] of “light.” With this clear musical reference to the third movement, Thompson directly transformed “mourning” into “light.”

Larger structure

In “Lamentations,” Thompson placed four themes into a larger ternary form. Each of the three major sections within the structure had two sections, a lament followed by a comfort. While it does not precisely mirror Part I, *Ye were sometimes darkness* has a similar overall form, with three major sections of two parts each, framed by an introduction and a coda.

Thompson described the structure of this movement in more detail than most others in his *Notes on a Requiem*: “...though not a fugue, its tonal structure is, nevertheless, basically fugal.... Briefly, the structure is: tonic—dominant—episode; relative minor—episode; subdominant—dominant pedal and episode; tonic—codetta with tonic pedal.”²⁴³ Though the main focus of this study is text setting, the fact that Thompson wrote this movement with such a clear large structure is important for two reasons. First, the form of many other movements was dictated by specific phrases of text and in many ways through-composed, and even when Thompson imposed a pre-existing form on a movement, it was generally simple (ex. the canon of *Sing with the spirit*, the scherzo-trio-scherzo of *Let them give glory*) or an alternation of several smaller themes (ex. *Sing unto him, Praise Him all ye stars of light*). And second, the fact that this grand

²⁴³ Ibid., 45.

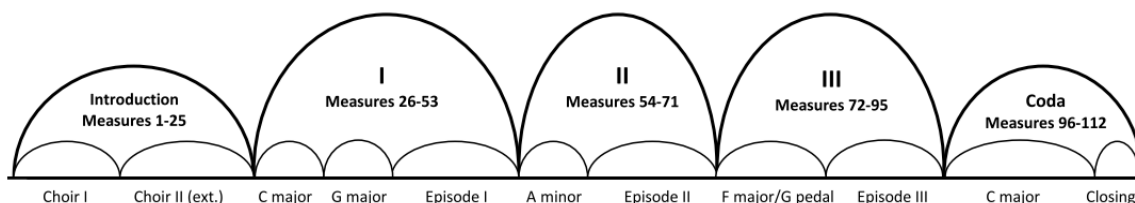


Figure 8.4. Formal map of *Ye were sometimes darkness*.

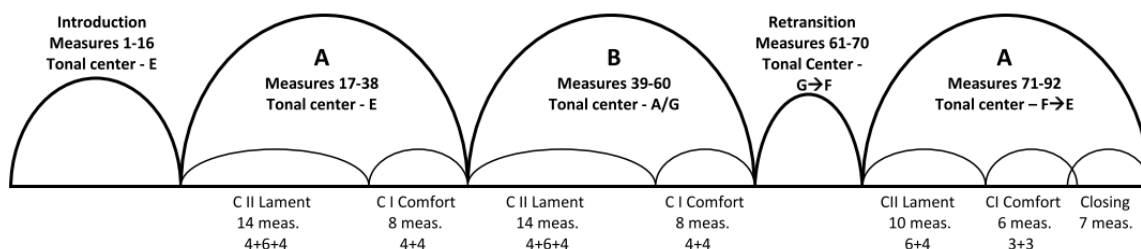


Figure 8.5. Formal map of Part I: "Lamentations."

formal design is seen in another movement as well, links the two dramatically—*Ye were sometimes darkness* is a parallel fulfillment of "Lamentations."

The larger structure as Thompson described it is illustrated in figure 8.4, and the map of "Lamentations" is included for comparison (fig. 8.5). Thompson called "Lamentations" "broadly ternary,"²⁴⁴ but since the B section was composed of similar, and not contrasting material to the A sections, it is more appropriate to call it three varied strophes. *Ye were sometimes darkness* does not follow an ABA model either—its three parts are varied strophes similar to "Lamentations." There are three major sections with similar components: in "Lamentations" it was a lament and a comfort; whereas in this movement each section has statements of the various "walking" themes followed by an "episode." Thompson called the form "fugal,"²⁴⁵ and that is certainly true in his description of the progression of keys and inclusion of pedals, but the more important

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 40.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 45.

formal feature is how this movement compares with the three-part form of “Lamentations.”

As indicated before, the two themes for “darkness” and “light” are used only in the introduction. Figure 8.1 shows the entire twelve-measure statement in C minor by Choir I, which is followed by an exact repetition of the same two themes by Choir II, in

The musical score consists of two systems, each with four staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). The tempo marking *poco rall.* is placed above each staff in both systems. The lyrics are: "walk as chil - dren, walk as chil - dren, walk as chil - dren of light." The first system starts at measure 110, and the second system starts at measure 111. The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, notes, rests, and bar lines.

Figure 8.6. *Ye were sometimes darkness*, measures 109-112.

D minor. Thompson extended the final cadence of Choir II's statement in order to return to C major at the start of Section I. The "walking" and "episode" sections continue in the series and keys indicated in figure 8.5 with some modifications each time. It is notable that following the introduction, all of the writing is for integrated eight-part choir, not double chorus.

To close the movement, Thompson sought to depict how "the little procession of children fades away in the distance."²⁴⁶ His method was simple, using fragments of the "walking" theme and pedal tones. For the last five bars, he used tonic pedal tones in three voices and a dominant pedal in one voice, while the remaining inner voices "walk" with staccato quarter notes in thirds (fig. 8.6).

The Lord shall be unto thee

After employing an expansive form for the first movement of Part V, Thompson set the next three movements more briefly and succinctly. As shown in the text analysis, the text for *The Lord shall be unto thee* and that for the previous movement had the metaphor of "light" as a common theme, so it made logical sense for Thompson to relate the two movements musically. This movement is for Choir II alone, and serves as their last statement to Choir I before they separate.

The unison tenor and bass line that opens the movement is drawn directly from the melodic theme that set the words "walk as children of light" in the previous movement (fig. 8.7).²⁴⁷ The quote is not used again, but it neatly links the two movements together. The other reference to the previous movement is the depiction

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 46.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 46.



Figure 8.7. *The Lord shall be unto thee*, Tenor and Bass, measures 1-2.

Figure 8.8. *The Lord shall be unto thee*, measures 8-10.

of “light” with a pedal point. Thompson takes the image much further in this movement, though, extending a constant tonic pedal on the F above middle C from the third measure to the end of the movement. This is a painting of the “everlasting light” of which this text speaks. The pedal is sung first by the tenors in measure 3, passed to the altos in measure 5, and finally the sopranos from measures 10 to the end of the piece in measure 16. In the case of the altos and the sopranos, Thompson perpetuated the light by dividing the voice parts in half, and had each alternate the line “an everlasting light” (fig. 8.8).

Meanwhile, the other voices sing in a slow-moving homophony that steps downward until the pedal F is the highest pitch in the chord. Many of the chords beneath the pedal are dissonant, twice including simultaneous D-flats and Cs (fig. 8.9, m. 10). However, the dissonance, slow tempo, and low *tessitura* is not meant to be dark or negative, but rather is meant to support the “solemnity of the text.”²⁴⁸

Return unto thy rest

In this movement, the souls finally take their leave and depart. Thompson used specific musical devices to show the unrest of the souls, their disembodiment, and finally their ascension.

The text has two parts repeated in an AABA pattern: “Return unto thy rest, O my soul,” and “for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.” In all three settings of the first phrase, Thompson repeated the word “return” several time, using pairs of chords separated by pauses, thus depicting the restlessness of the souls without using dissonance

Poco Adagio (♩ = 54)

Re - turn, re - turn, re - turn un - to thy rest, O my soul.

Figure 8.9. *Return unto thy rest*, measures 1-6.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 45.

that might taint the success of their “errand of mercy.”²⁴⁹ As a result, all of the chords are consonant triads, and in place of dissonance, he used dramatic pauses and modulation through Neapolitan sixth chords (fig. 8.9).

A second depiction that Thompson sought was that of the gradual disembodiment of the soul. His musical solution was a symbolic one. At the end of each of the three “Return unto thy rest” sections, the final chord resolves to a single pitch. The first instance of this is seen in figure 8.9, when the lower two voices drop out of the final cadence. The second time, three voices drop out to leave a single pitch (fig. 8.10). And finally at the end of the piece, four voices exit, leaving a half of a soprano section on the final note (fig. 8.11). Thompson claims that this musical gesture was inspired by the madrigals of Monteverdi: “This movement would never be mistaken for the work of the Divine Claudio, but I could never have written it if I had not studied with him—as I somehow like to think I did.”²⁵⁰

The image shows a musical score for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in measures 12-14. The lyrics are "turn un - to thy rest, O my soul;". The score is written in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The dynamics are marked as *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *p* (piano) leading to *pp* (pianissimo). The music features a gradual disembodiment of the soul, with the lower voices dropping out in measure 14, leaving only the soprano line.

Figure 8.10. *Return unto thy rest*, measures 12-14.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 46.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 46.

Molto sostenuto

SOPRANO I

ppp

30

35

O my soul, O my soul, O my soul, my soul.

SOPRANO II

ppp

O my soul, O my soul, O my soul, my soul.

pp

O my soul, O my soul, O my soul, O my soul.

ppp

espressivo

O my soul, O my soul, O my soul, O my soul.

ppp

O my soul, O my soul, O my soul, my soul.

Figure 8.11. *Return unto thy rest*, measures 26-35.

One final symbolic musical gesture brings the souls to heaven at the close of the movement, seen in figure 8.11. The souls of Choir I ascend in root-position triads through an octave via a whole-tone scale, from A to A. The ascent continues in divided soprano parts until an authentic cadence in A. As mentioned before, four voices drop out at the cadence to represent the final disembodiment of the soul. Through the absence of dissonance, tension produced by pauses and unexpected harmonies, and several madrigal-like gestures; Thompson portrayed a peaceful leave-taking.

Thou hast given him

“Chorus II responds with serene resignation.”²⁵¹ In setting this text, Thompson both aptly painted the dramatic scene, and also found a musical way to further emphasize the mourners’ acceptance of the message delivered by the souls of the faithful.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 46.

Lento e tranquillo ($\text{♩} = 50 - 54$)

SOPRANO

ALTO *pp ma con calore*
Thou hast giv - en him his heart's de - sire,

TENOR *pp ma con calore*
Thou hast giv - en him his heart's de - sire,

BASS I *pp ma con calore*
Thou hast giv - en him his heart's de - sire,

BASS II *pp ma con calore*
Thou hast giv - en him his heart's de - sire,

Figure 8.12. *Thou hast given him*, measures 1-4.

This “serene resignation” is represented with a dark scoring that accentuates the solemn affect obliged by the text. With the basses divided and the sopranos silent, Thompson set the first two phrases of text in chorale-like homophony (fig. 8.12). As in the previous movement, there is little dissonance and the overall affect is peacefulness. This scoring also added brightness to the text, “He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest him a long life.” For this text, Thompson tied the mourners to the message of the faithful with one final statement of the eternal God and life themes, which were last sung by Choir I in the last movement of Part IV. The complete statement is included in figure 8.14. In order to set the text and emphasize this final hearing of the eternal God and life themes, Thompson made several important alterations to it. First, the melismatic life motive is drawn out for an additional phrase, which naturally adds emphasis, but also aptly paints the word “long.” Secondly, the cadential material is also significantly expanded, again for the word “long,” but also to balance the expansion of the previous phrase. Because of its length, the life motive crescendos to *forte*, which is beyond the dynamic of all of the

10 *pp*
He ask'd life — of Thee, and Thou gav - est him a

pp
He ask'd life — of Thee, and Thou gav - est him a —

pp
He ask'd life of Thee, and Thou gav - est him a

BASS I and BASS II
pp (divisi) (unite)
He ask'd life of Thee, and Thou gav - est him a —

15 *poco accel.* *cresc.* *poco rall.*
long —

poco accel. *cresc.* *poco rall.*
long, —

poco accel. *cresc.* *poco rall.*
long, —

poco accel. *cresc.* *poco rall.*
long, —

a tempo *f dim.* *mp* *p* 20 *pp*
life, a long life, long —

a tempo *f dim.* *mp* *p* *pp*
a long — life, long — life, long —

a tempo *f dim.* *mp* *p* *pp*
a long — life, long — life, long —

a tempo *f dim.* *mp* *p* *pp*
a long — life, long — life, long —

Figure 8.13. Thou hast given him, measures 10-32.

Figure 8.13. (continued)

previous iterations. An extended cadence allowed ample time for the dynamic to recede back to *pianissimo* without sounding hurried. For practical reasons, the extension also gave Thompson time to modulate from A-flat major at the first cadence to E major, the key of the final movement.

The final phrase returns to the mood of the opening statements, but not the scoring. At this point, the mourners are finishing their part of the drama, and must seem in a state of complete peace. To that end, “at the words ‘even for ever and ever,’ three root-position chords descending by thirds (one of the calmest progressions in music) lead to a long plagal cadence (one of the gentlest of all closes)” (fig. 8.13, mm. 26-32).²⁵²

Amen and amen, alleluia

There is little to analyze about the prosody or specific text setting in a summative phrase such as “Amen and amen, alleluia,” but some general comments are appropriate regarding the way that the two characters are represented dramatically in this epilogue.

²⁵² Ibid., 46.

quite different, but this direct quote is an example Thompson's respect for Bach and his love of Baroque counterpoint.²⁵³

As in the previous two fugues in the *Requiem*, this theme opens with a stepwise ascent, but this one rises further than the others and is much longer overall. While the others started on tonic and rose to subdominant (*O let the nations be glad*, Part III) and dominant (*Utter a song*, Part III), this theme rises stepwise from the mediant to the tonic. Because this longer ascent is also embellished, the whole theme is nearly two times longer than either of the other two. The other themes were aptly described as "brief" and "simple," but Thompson closed the *Requiem* with a grander subject overall.

Each of the fugal sections are brief, and are juxtaposed with the homophonic statements of Choir I. The end of the first fugal section and the entirety of the first Choir I episode are seen in figure 8.16. The theme used for Choir I to set the text "alleluia" is another case of self-borrowing. In the summer of 1957, only months before starting work on the *Requiem*, Thompson had written *The Passenger* for baritone soloist and piano. The mood of the song is quite somber, but between the soloist's verses there are "two piano interludes that suggest a distant angelic choir," which is exactly the character he was painting for Choir I at the end of the *Requiem*.²⁵⁴ Thompson rescored and transposed the piano interlude, setting each of the six phrases with the word "alleluia." The shapes and lengths of the several phrases resulted in a variety of settings of the word. The word "alleluia" can be accented on several of its syllables depending on its musical setting, and

²⁵³ James Haar, "Randall Thompson and the music of the past," in *Randall Thompson: A Choral Legacy*, ed. Alfred Mann (Boston: E. C. Schirmer, 1983), 49-50.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 47.

Chorus I
20

ppp come da lontano

Al - le - lu - ia,

ppp come da lontano

Al - le - lu - ia,

ppp come da lontano

Al - le - lu -

ppp come da lontano

Al - le - lu -

Chorus II
20

ff

men, a - men and a - men.

ff

a - men and a - men.

ff

men, a - men and a - men.

ff

men and a - men.

30

ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -

ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -

ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -

ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -

Figure 8.16. Amen and amen, alleluia, measures 20-32.

Chorus I 25

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - le - lu - ia.

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - le - lu - ia.

ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - le - lu - ia.

ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - le - lu - ia.

Figure 8.16. (continued)

here Thompson uses a few of them. In the first phrase (fig. 8.16, mm. 22-23), both “al” and “lu” are accented both by arriving on downbeats and having a duration of three beats, while the second and fourth syllables are deemphasized on the fourth beats of each measure. This contrasts completely with the fifth phrase, which uses the “al” as an anacrusis and uses both “al” and “le” as its florid syllables. The lengths of the phrases also vary, from four to nine measures. With the combination of varying phrase length and rhythmic text underlay, Thompson was able to create a brief “alleluia” that was both interesting and well-suited to motivic development later in the movement.

On a larger scale, Thompson constructed the final movement as an alternation between the fugal portions and the “alleluia” episodes, and then closed the movement with both choirs singing. The form is briefly described in Table 8.1.

Thompson had said that the “very sound of [the double chorus of mixed voices] can hardly fail to impress the listener with its inherent dignity, its serenity, and its

potential grandeur.”²⁵⁵ At the close of the entire *Requiem*, Thompson used the double choir to elicit all of those feelings. The sections referred to as “Climax” and “Coda” in Table 8.1 are reproduced in figure 8.17. When he discussed the tonal plan of the *Requiem* he had said that in “the climax of the final chorus, with the single and only high B...was already in my mind and I worked backwards from that.” That moment is seen here in measure 130, where the tempo slows suddenly and dramatically to rest on two tonic triads (beats 2 and 4). These chords and the florid passage which follows (based on the “alleluia” theme) evoke the “grandeur” and “dignity” of which Thompson spoke. He also took advantage of the expanded voicing possibilities gained by eight voice-parts—without losing the sonority, he was able to reinforce the dramatic Soprano I line with unison octaves in T. I, A. I, and A. II.

With the cadence on D major in measure 125, repeated in measure 128, Thompson tied this ending to a melodic and cadential device he had used throughout the entire work. Very few of the movements ended with authentic cadences—in their place, several of the more climactic choruses ended with mixolydian cadences, employing the

Table 8.1

Measures	Choir(s)	Musical elements	Key
1-21	II	Fugue	E major
22-32	I	Alleluia	E major
32-45	II	Fugue	C-sharp minor
46-54	I and II	Contrasting antiphony derived from respective themes	C-sharp minor
55-62	II	Fugue	Modulating to G major
62-81	I	Alleluia (extended)	G major
82-94	II	Fugue	A major
107-119	I and II	Antiphony: Alleluia theme	E major
120-128	I and II	Climax: florid Alleluia material in eight parts	E major, cadence in D major
129-139	I and II	Coda	E major

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 34.

120
Trattenuto
Tempo I°

rall.
ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -

rall.
ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -

rall.
8 ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -

rall.
ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -

rall.
120 Trattenuto
Tempo I°

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -

rall.
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -

rall.
8 al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -

rall.
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -

Figure 8.17. Amen and amen, alleluia, measures 119-139. The “Climax” and “Coda” sections that close the entire *Requiem*.

This musical score is for a four-part vocal setting in D major, featuring Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass staves. The lyrics are 'le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -'. The score is divided into two systems, each containing four staves. The first system begins with a measure marked '8' on the Tenor staff. The tempo markings 'rall.' and 'Ritenuato' are placed above the Soprano staff in the first system, and '125 rall.' and 'Ritenuato' are placed above the Soprano staff in the second system. The lyrics are distributed across the staves: Soprano (le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -), Alto (le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -), Tenor (le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -), and Bass (le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al -). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Figure 8.17. (continued)

130
Lento e sereno (♩ = 44)

pp *poco rall. pp*

le - lu - ia. Al-le -

p *poco rall.*

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

f *pp* *poco rall.*

8 al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

pp *poco rall.*

Al - le - lu - ia.

130
Lento e sereno (♩ = 44)

p *dolcissimo* *poco cresc.* *mf dim.* *poco rall.*

A - men and a -

pp *poco rall.* *pp*

le - lu - ia. Al -

pp *(poco rall.)*

8 le - lu - ia.

pp *poco rall. pp*

le - lu - ia. Al - le -

Figure 8.17. (continued)

135
Più lento e molto sostenuto (♩ = 40)

lu - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. A - men.

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. A - men.

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. A - men.

Al - le - lu - ia. A - men.

men. Al - le - lu - ia. A - men.

- le - lu - ia. A - men.

Al - le - lu - ia. A - men.

lu - le - lu - ia. A - men.

Figure 8.17. (continued)

lowered-seventh scale degree for their distinctive sound (e.g. *Utter a Song, Praise Him all ye stars of light*). Melodically, Thompson had used the lowered-seventh scale degree several times, most obviously in Part II, for the phrases “Stay yourselves and wonder” and “Behold ye, regard, and wonder marvelously.” Elliot Forbes cited the lowered-seventh scale degree as one of Thompson’s trademark American sounds, saying that

Thompson uses it equally well to paint “moments ridiculous or sublime.”²⁵⁶ Here, Thompson built a major triad on that trademark pitch for yet another mixolydian cadence, continuing a thread that ran throughout the work.

Rather than closing the *Requiem* with the celebratory climax, Thompson used the double-choir texture to evoke “serenity” in the final section marked *Lento*. In it, he brought back four specific features from earlier in the work. First, the “amen” and “alleluia” themes directly coexist for the first time: the sopranos of Choir II offer one more clear statement of the fugue, exactly as it was heard at the beginning of the movement; while the altos of Choir I sing the first phrase of the “alleluia” melody in augmentation (fig. 8.19, mm. 129-133). As soon as that quote closes, the second and third begin in measures 134-135: the sopranos of Choir I again invoke “light” and “stars” with an octave leap to a tonic pedal; while below is a final D major chord in the last mixolydian cadence. This time Thompson voices the D major chord in second inversion, so that by virtue of its A in the bass, the chord sounds as a replacement of IV in a plagal cadence. The fourth and final earlier reference is the symbolic nature of this specific cadence, which Thompson said “is an extension of the final cadence of Part I, transformed by the singular beauty of the *u*-sound in a soft ‘Alleluia.’”²⁵⁷ “Lamentations” also ended with a mixolydian cadence, in E major with tonic pedal points (see fig. 4.13, p 101), which ties the two together by their sound, but Thompson also imported his symbolic voicing. The distribution of the parts in the two chords is not identical, but Thompson metaphorically represented the earth-bound mortals and the faithful, now in

²⁵⁶ Forbes, “Americana,” 70. The other specific reference that Forbes made was to the final movement of *Americana*.

²⁵⁷ Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 47.

heaven, by weaving the chords together so that “the *Alleluia* of one chorus floats above the *Amen* of the other, the chorus of mortals.”²⁵⁸ This is clearly seen in the final chord, with each Choir I voice-part singing a chord member directly above their Choir II counterpart.

The Leave-taking: Performance Considerations

Overall

As in Part IV, contrast between the choirs is no longer the chief goal in performance, since they are united in purpose. Each movement of this last part does have a particular story to communicate, though, and the interpretation of each of the choirs must reflect that. Some of the overriding concepts that permeate all of this part are the emotions of peace and joy, and the reality of Choir II’s assimilation of Choir I’s message. They have not only received and accepted the message, they have become its champion as well.

Ye were sometimes darkness

Of all five movements, this is the one with the greatest variety of sounds for the choirs to use, as they paint the three images of “darkness,” “light,” and the “walking children.” The darkness appears first, and can be delivered with a more covered tone quality reminiscent of “Lamentations.” To complete the scene, the dynamic should be kept to the indicated range of *pianissimo* to *mezzo piano*, and diction should be precise but not draw attention to itself. Thompson indicated swells with crescendos and decrescendos to match the shape of each phrase (see fig. 8.1). These correspond to an overall increasing dynamic that peaks in measure 6 and recedes in the same direction as the voices. The many syncopations and eighth notes could encourage accents, but since

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 48.

the many syncopations in this passage paint nervousness or anxiousness, they should not be strengthened with any dynamic accent. Similarly, the ending [s] sounds that occur on many partial beats should be short and soft to reflect their weak position. For imagery, the succession of appoggiaturas could be interpreted as the choir attempting to climb out of the metaphorical darkness, only to be pulled back into it.

The corresponding “light” theme must be a polar opposite, just like the text and the music were shown to be. Without letting the dynamic increase beyond what is indicated (the same *pianissimo* to *mezzo piano* range), the singers should draw a distinction between the dark, covered tone quality of the previous measures and the brighter tone quality needed to paint “light.” The contrast of bright tone quality is amplified by the many open vowels in the text and the whole-tone scales in the lower voices. When the “light” theme recedes, the tone quality should remain light and open, so that there is no transition back to the “darkness” from before.

Five different musical elements were identified in reference to the “walking” portion of this movement, four that combined to form a single unit (see fig. 8.2) and one that constituted the “episode” portions. The melodic setting of the text should have a slight dynamic rise and fall that mirrors its melodic shape, but not at the expense of the clear presence of the half-note pulse, with is the tempo of the march. Too much dynamic swelling could suggest other images (such as waves on a sea) rather than walking. The staccato setting must contrast with the legato melody in its length, but again emphasize the half-note pulse. All of the octave leaps in the staccato melodies must be sung lightly to resist sliding in and out of the upper pitches, a problem that will be further alleviated by ensuring that the notes are truly sung staccato. In each of the brief mixolydian

passages (e.g. fig. 8.2, m. 32), Thompson placed a *tenuto* on the syllable “chil-,” emphasizing both the unexpected pitch and the strongest syllable of the phrase.

Thompson used no accents in the entire movements, but did put *tenuto* markings on that syllable in many places, but not on any other syllable, so it is clear that Thompson wished that to be the most important syllable whenever it is sung. The fourth basic element is the many pedal points on the word “light.” Like the “stars” in Part IV, they should be sung with a pure, stable tone and a bright, open vowel. However, in this case they are used as background material and should not overshadow the other parts.

It is notable that Thompson did not use any accents, even in the climactic “episode” moments, a fact that should be reflected in how they are sung. In the musical analysis a contrast was drawn between the episode climaxes and their parallel moments in “Lamentations.” Here, the musical energy increases gradually, whereas in “Lamentations” the moments of “mourning” arrived suddenly. The gradual crescendo, coupled with Thompson’s exclusion of accents shows that he wished that these climaxes gain no intensity by means of surprise or sudden harshness. Consequently, all singers should avoid using unintended accents at these moments.

All of the tempos are clearly indicated in the score, but some modifications were added when the score was published. Originally, there had been no *rallentando* into each of the three climaxes, but they were added for the published score. One significant adjustment that appeared in the hand-corrected score but did not appear in the published version was a change in the indicated tempo of the entire movement proper. In measure 26, a tempo of half note = 66 is indicated, with the instruction *come una marcia lenta* (like a slow march). In the corrected score, this was revised to half note = 48-50, which

would become an extremely slow march, and encourage the dominance of the quarter-note pulse instead. A desire to keep the half-note pulse dominant may have contributed to this change not appearing in the published score.

The Lord shall be unto thee

Though the opening of this movement derives from the previous one, the immediate presence of a *forte* dynamic and a series of accents differentiate the sound immediately. Two important pictures must be communicated in this brief movement: first, the presence of the “everlasting light” pedal point that continues through the entire movement; and second, the changing mood of Choir II which progresses from bold confidence at the opening to solemnity at the end. With regards to the progression of mood, observing Thompson’s markings specifically are sufficient. Not only did he gradually lower the pitch level through the entire movement, he matched that with decreasing dynamics, fewer accents, and slower rhythms in the voices not singing the pedal point (fig. 8.18). The musical setting itself encourages such a progression through its descent in pitch and volume, so the performance should reflect that as well.

The “everlasting light” pedal is introduced quite prominently, with the tenors holding the high F at a *fortissimo* dynamic as the other parts are momentarily silent (fig. 8.21). This should fix the pedal point in the minds of the audience, but as the pitch is transferred to the altos in measure 5, and ultimately the sopranos in measure 9, its

[illegible]

Figure 8.18. *The Lord shall be unto thee*, measures 6-10.

light, — an ev - er - last - ing light, an ev - er - last - ing

light, — an ev - er - last - ing light, an ev - er - last - ing

last - ing light, an ev - er - last - ing light, an ev - er -

light, — an ev - er - last - ing light, — an ev - er - last - ing

Figure 8.19. *The Lord shall be unto thee*, measures 3-5.

constancy would be enhanced by having the three voice parts attempt to match their tone qualities on that pitch so the transition is as seamless as possible. The smaller the deviation in the tone quality of the pedal point, the more accurate the aural picture of “everlasting light” becomes.

Return unto thy rest

As is so common in the *Requiem*, Thompson’s dynamic and articulation markings are detailed, and observing them carefully is the key to maximizing the drama in the musical setting. This particular movement has three specific challenges: silence, dynamic variation, and intonation.

The first two challenges are most present during the repetitions of the word “return,” which appear in three groups in the movement. The musical analysis revealed that Thompson used silence as a dramatic tool in this movement in place of dissonance, and since he was so specific in the length of each silence (as he was in *Sing with the spirit*), they should be measured and accurate in performance. Thompson also indicated a louder dynamic for each repetition, most clearly seen in measures 8-12, where there are four repetitions of the word “return” (fig. 8.20). Each new dynamic must be precisely

The musical score for 'Return unto thy rest' measures 6-11 is presented for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The lyrics are 'soul. Re - turn, re - turn, re - turn, re - turn, re -'. The score includes dynamic markings: *pp* (pianissimo), *p* (piano), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). Measure numbers 8 and 10 are indicated. The score shows the progression of the word 'return' being repeated, with dynamics increasing for each repetition.

Figure 8.20. *Return unto thy rest*, measures 6-11.

executed to achieve the desired effect, because the dynamic range and direction is different for each. figure 8.20 shows the second of the three episodes, reaching *mezzo forte* at its peak. The next repeating series begins eight measures later and begins *f*, so the correct relative dynamic level between the two should be preserved.

Figure 8.20 also reveals musical elements that challenge intonation. Thompson was right when he said that the movement is “almost wholly consonant,”²⁵⁹ but the juxtaposition of those consonances is challenging. The two sides of each silence sometimes contain remarkably different chords that may be difficult for singers to visualize, since the music is constantly modulating. For example, in measure 10, the singers leave a G-major triad and move to a C-flat-major triad, with three of the voices moving the interval of a diminished-fourth. Additionally, the C-flat-major triad’s function is active, acting as a Neapolitan triad to the B-flat-major triad in measure 11. While these are not insurmountable difficulties, with the music constantly modulating and long silences between unstable chords, intonation becomes one of the greater challenges in this brief movement.

One final consideration is a matter of “staging.” In the printed score, it is indicated that Choir I is seated at the beginning of the *Amen and amen, alleluia*, but there is no indication for them to sit down. In the corrected manuscript score, however, there is a handwritten indication for Choir I to sit at the end of this movement. Dramatically, the ascent of the souls into heaven (which this movement represents) is the appropriate time, and Choir I should sit at the conclusion of the movement.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 46.

Thou hast given him

This movement is Choir II's only opportunity to sing the eternal God and life motives that have been sung by Choir I throughout the *Requiem*. Surrounding those themes is some of the softest, most gentle music in Choir II's entire part, which is fitting for the end of the piece.

The life music, as shown in the musical analysis, is extended here beyond its original dimensions. This makes pacing the various indications of *poco accelerando*, *crescendo*, and *poco rallentando* for the motive different than in the previous iterations (each instance has the same three features) because they happen over longer periods of time (fig. 8.13). Another temptation may be to sing this movement faster than the indicated tempo (half note = 54) because of its equally slow rhythms. At this speed, the full measure of rest before the last phrase (fig. 8.14, m. 25) is a full five seconds. Conductors and choirs should resist the urge to shorten rests or speed up because of the dramatic intent of this moment. Apart from the closing fugue, it is the final statement in the *Requiem*, and should be viewed in the context of the entire work.

Amen and amen, alleluia

There are two major considerations for the performance of this movement, one technical and the other dramatic. Between the facsimile and published editions, Thompson made a major revision to the tempo of this movement: originally, the meter was cut-time, with an indicated tempo of half-note = 80; in the published score, that had changed to a 4/4 meter, with an indicated tempo of quarter note = 96. Proportionally, this represents a 40% reduction in the tempo, which changes the character of the entire movement. In the Harvard recording from 1959, the choir stayed near the revised

tempo²⁶⁰—about quarter note = 100—which indicates that Thompson had revised the tempo after the premiere. It is unclear why Thompson reduced the tempo so drastically, but it is possible that the singers, for both the premiere performance and at Harvard during the rehearsal process, had difficulty navigating the many eighth-note runs in the fugue sections at that speed, or at the very least could not make them clear.

Observing the revised tempo is appropriate, and the reduced speed likely improved the clarity of each line, but there is one feature of the original tempo that informs the performance of the revised one. Thompson's previous meter choice shows that he originally conceived this entire movement, from the fugue subject on, in a cut-time. Consequently, the performance should have a clear feeling of the larger beat (half-note level) as opposed to the smaller (quarter-note level), whether the movement is conducted with a two- or a four-pattern.

"The *Requiem* has been called 'a happy song of death.' Certainly here all is joy."²⁶¹ With that introduction, Thompson gives a general mood to the entire movement. Taken together, the *Requiem* covers the entire gamut of emotions from uncontrollable lament to quiet serenity. "Joy" is the simplest and most appropriate descriptor of this movement, and thus should be the general mood that governs the delivery. Thompson did not make it clear what dramatic scene he attempted to depict in this closing movement, but some characteristics of the music and a "staging" instruction give it more dramatic intent than just a purely musical epilogue. First, there is a feeling distance placed between Choirs I and II at the beginning of the movement in two ways. First, the mourners (Choir

²⁶⁰ Randall Thompson, *Requiem*, Harvard Glee Club and Radcliffe Choral Society, dir. Elliot Forbes, Technicord T15-16, 1959.

²⁶¹ Thompson, "Notes on a *Requiem*," 46-47.

II) begin the fugue at a moderate dynamic and increase all the way to *fortissimo* by the end of their initial statement. When Choir I enters with their “angelic” homophonic theme in measure 22, their dynamic is *pianississimo* for the entire first statement, and they are to still be seated as they sing it. This may be a picture of the chorus of the faithful singing from heaven while the chorus of the mourners remains on earth.

After one more statement from each choir at the contrasting dynamics, Choir I is instructed to stand suddenly in measure 53, and all of their music from that point on matches the dynamics of Choir II. Therefore, both of the contrasting factors are suddenly removed and suggest several possible dramatic interpretations: Choir I has returned from heaven for one more praise chorus; the focus is suddenly on both locations (heaven and earth), and they praise together still at a distance; or this could be foreshadowing the reunion when Choir II dies and goes to heaven. These differences are unclear and may be subtle, but they have an impact on how the two choirs interact for the rest of the movement. If they are still physically separated (heaven and earth), there is less interaction possible and both Choirs I and II can act, as they sing their respective segments, in a more dramatically neutral or detached way. If, however, they are together, they can acknowledge each other as characters (with glances or looks, for example) as the music is passed between them. The latter, and more involved, staging would be more consistent with the rest of the work, particularly in how this Choir I “standing” moment parallels with the Choir II “standing” moment at the end of Part III. Either option is valid, but both should be considered.

Summary

With this closing section of the *Requiem*, Thompson closed the drama with five important dramatic scenes. First, there was a corporate message delivered by both choirs that summarized the entire drama. Second, the mourners said their parting words to the faithful. Third, the faithful satisfied the restlessness of their souls and “returned to their rest” in death, having completed their “errand of mercy.”²⁶² Fourth, the mourners reflected on the departure of the faithful with peace and faith in God. And fifth, to close the *Requiem*, Choirs I and II joined together for one more chorus of praise. Some of the texts themselves are tied symbolically to other moments in the *Requiem*, such as the “Amen and amen” quote from Psalm 89.

Thompson’s musical setting of these five scenes reflected their individual texts masterfully, with sensitive prosody, text-painting, and detailed creation of affect through the use of motives, harmonies, and modal colors. But Thompson also tied these five movements carefully to the entire context of the work, through structural parallels (*Ye were sometimes darkness* and “Lamentations”), melodic quotation (*Thou hast given Him; Amen and amen, alleluia*), and specific uses of the mixolydian mode. In all, the music reflected the text on every level—from the prosody of specific words to its overall summative purpose in the drama.

Performing “The Leave-taking” has several challenges, but the drama is not as complex as some of the other sections of the *Requiem*. The outer choruses—*Ye were sometimes darkness* and *Amen and amen, alleluia*—are the only ones for both choirs, and are by far the most musically complex, but consistent use of thematic material eases their preparation. The three interior movements have specific dramatic scenes for the choir to

²⁶² Thompson, “Notes on a *Requiem*,” 46.

communicate and individual challenges. In *The Lord shall be unto thee*, Choir II, must support a ubiquitous pedal point as their music and mood become increasingly softer and more solemn. In *Return unto thy rest*, Choir I must take full advantage of dramatic silences and navigate pervasive modulations as they musically depict their souls' disembodiment and ascent to heaven. And in *Thou hast given him*, Choir II must project peace and tranquility, and also relish in their single statement of the eternal God and life motives. In all movements, Randall Thompson added expressive descriptions and carefully indicated articulations and dynamics in ways that would enhance the drama.

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 9: Summary and Conclusions

The *Requiem* is a lengthy and complex work, as the previous analysis exhibited. From the initial assembly of the text, to the precise articulation and dynamic markings, Thompson was meticulous in how crafted the piece. This summary begins by collecting in one place the most important features of the *Requiem* discovered in the analysis, showing a picture of a work that was brilliantly conceived and masterfully executed on all levels. Following that, there is a discussion of the significance of the *Requiem* in Randall Thompson's *oeuvre* and in the pantheon of Requiem music in general.

Text Assembly

Thompson's *Requiem* text is part of a heritage of Requiem settings that had become more personal in nature over the previous hundred years. Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* represented a departure from the traditional Requiem Mass text, and in the following years composers began to personalize Requiem settings even more by modifying the traditional text or including contemporary poetry. Though these newer works on the subject of death are not Requiems in the traditional sense, their focus on the subject of death unifies their genre. Thompson's statement on death is also highly individual.

The text of the *Requiem* is clearly one of its most notable features, and because the musical setting grew out of the text specifically, the text assembly is the central feature of the work. Thompson's care in crafting the text was as meticulous as his

compositional practices, and resulted in a text that—though taken from a pre-existing source—was something entirely new and individual.

When Thompson approached the Bible as his text source, he did so in a different way than composers often do, or that he had previously attempted. He did not collect complete stories, scenes, or particular characters from the Bible to fill his preconceived drama about death. Instead, Thompson extracted individual phrases that had little or no direct relationship to each other and placed them together to deliver a new message he wished to convey in this drama. This is in contrast to how Brahms drew on scripture for his *Ein deutsches Requiem*, or even Thompson's *The Peaceable Kingdom*—in both of those works the pieces of text were taken as individual, cohesive units. In the *Requiem*, Thompson reinvented individual phrases by giving them an entirely new context. Even when the meaning of an individual phrase was near to its Biblical context, it gained an entirely new purpose when spoken as a line in the drama. And on several occasions, phrases were taken extremely far out of context, being completely transformed by their new surroundings within the *Requiem*.

Though Thompson created his dramatic dialogue with texts appropriated from the Bible, he did not rearrange them in such a way to tell a story that conflicted with the Biblical message. The overall message of the Bible—salvation and eternal life received through faith in God—was what Thompson expressed through the means of the dialogue. In that way, the *Requiem* text represents Thompson's personal "credo," delivered in a dramatic fashion. The fact that he used only Biblical words to create this individual statement shows his trust in the universality of the message that he delivered. This is supported further by the several symbolic uses of text that appear in the *Requiem*,

particularly the opening words of comfort from Choir I, “Mourn not, weep not, cry not, grieve not,” taken from four different Biblical characters in four different stories. By creating his dialogue, Thompson made a personal statement that these diverse, disparate statements were actually part of only one comprehensive Biblical message.

Because Thompson was not working with a pre-existing cohesive text, he was able to make practical considerations that informed the musical form of the work before a note was on a page. In matters of ensemble selection, pacing of the drama, and forms of individual movements, the text was a driving force. Thompson said that the double-choir a cappella medium was prescribed by the form of the text—a dialogue needed conflict, and two choirs could display that most easily. He also chose not to use an accompaniment for the choirs, which offered the two choirs no common ground musically. All of their common ground was compelled to be established musically in the course of the work. If Parts I-V can be viewed as acts or scenes in the drama, this small-scale text assembly also allowed Thompson the opportunity to pace the dramatic intensity of each scene by choosing phrases with increasingly more intense language (seen most clearly in Part II). Thompson’s selections also dictated the forms of some of the movements. Texts that were brief often became fugues or movements with large episodic assemblies, while those that had more text were eventually set in a declamatory style with little repetition. This is similar to the way a librettist crafts a text with an eye towards recitative and aria portions. All of these practical considerations were built into the text as it was assembled, revealing Thompson to be an excellent craftsman not just of music but also of text.

Clearly, Thompson had created a statement more individual and personal than any of his other works to date when he assembled the *Requiem* text. By reinventing lines of

Biblical text within their new context, he was able to say what he specifically wanted to communicate about the topic of death. Using a dramatic dialogue for this purpose was a unique synthesis of secular Renaissance models and the heritage of more modern personalized Requiem settings.

Musical Features

To this masterful collection of texts, Thompson composed music that enhanced their meanings on all levels. While his sensitive prosody made the musical lines easy to sing by matching text rhythms, Thompson also told the *Requiem* story through careful management of musical affect. The text alone shows how Thompson viewed death, but the musical environment surrounding each phrase enhances its meaning.

The various affects created by the music were discussed in the analysis as they arose, but there are important common themes to be identified. Choir I delivers a message of life, which is often expressed with music that is still and serene. In contrast, the mourning of Choir II is painted with a music full of activity and motion. This contrast and correlation is most clearly seen in Parts I and II, when the two choirs are in their greatest emotional contrast. Choir II shows constant motion and activity in their “Lamentations” themes, and in their declamatory statements in the debate (*What man is he?*). To all of those statements, Choir I responded with more static, resolute music. The eternal God motive is the recurring projection of this serenity. Its partner motive—the life motive—has more motion, but settles into a peaceful cadence. The recurrence of this theme show the message of Choir I to never waver in its conviction, even in the debate. As Thompson’s personal statement, this pervasive message of peace and stillness in relation to life after death suggests that he was similarly at peace.

The various musical forms and text-painting Thompson used to depict the text have been discussed in detail, but there are some global features that can be drawn from them. Thompson created affects for movements (or large sections of them) through the creation of themes, and varied the individual lines within them. Text-painting devices and good prosody gave the individual phrases of text unique settings, but the musical environment in which they were placed helped tie their ideas together, providing both textual and musical unity. For instance, each phrase of the debate (*What man is he?*) delivered by Choir II has a cohesive affect, with declamatory statements that produce a mood that is hurried, frantic, and desperate. However, the music is varied from phrase to phrase to set them all with a natural prosody. The text informed the setting deeply, but not in a superficial way.

With such a close relationship between text and music, it is also notable that Thompson did not rely on text structures for musical forms. The amount and subject matter of texts influenced the selection of forms, but did not produce the formal structures themselves. Instead, he would compose themes appropriate to individual phrases of text with respect to their prosody and affect, and then build his musical structures with them. In doing so, he was able to increase dramatic intensity with musical features repeating the same text. The best examples of this independent formal design are “Lamentations,” *Sing Unto Him*, and *Ye Were Sometimes Darkness*.

Performance indications were another tool that Thompson utilized to great advantage. He was particularly concerned about not only with the pitch and rhythm of a specific line, but also precisely how it was sung. With the multitudinous indications of tempo, articulation, dynamics, and other performance features, it is fair to conclude that

Thompson thought about the delivery of each individual line. When analyzed in relationship to their contexts, each of the indications enhances Thompson's meaning for the text, so adherence to them is important.

In view of the entire *Requiem*, it is clear the Thompson succeeded in building a cohesive musical structure that was perfectly wedded to his carefully constructed text. Individual phrases have natural prosody and are set within an affect that adds depth to their meaning. The themes are expertly arranged and varied into larger forms and paced dramatically through the use of performance indications. Unity is achieved in both text and music separately, and in their relationship to each other. In total, it is fair to view the *Requiem* as Thompson's masterpiece of text setting. At all stages in the composition, both the global structure and message of the entire work were considered, so that each individual word and note supported Thompson's statement on death. The result is a grand interconnected web of text and music that is the first statement of its kind on the subject of death.

An American Requiem

Many composers have written Requiem settings, and it is common for them to be interpreted as a window into the composer's beliefs about the most serious of subjects—life and death. Music is the “mirror” that Thompson was referring to in his speech, reflecting the concrete feelings of those who wrote the music. Because the subject matter is of eternal importance, settings of the Requiem Mass and other death-related music are frequently viewed as some of the most pure and comprehensive examples of a composer's individual style, focused into a single work.

Thompson's *Requiem* is such a work. Within its massive structure are the essence of Thompson's compositional style, collected in a single musical expression. Though it was personal to Thompson, in many ways the *Requiem* was thoroughly American in concept and composition. As referenced earlier, Thompson was committed to seeing American music developed in a manner distinct from European traditions, and was identified by Copland as one of a generation of American composers who could realize that goal. Though there was an original inspiration from Renaissance madrigal cycles, the Thompson *Requiem* was not based on the liturgical text, which was developed in Europe and set by its composers for centuries. He did not substitute or add contemporary secular poetry for the Requiem Mass, as some contemporaries had (and Benjamin Britten would do four years later in *War Requiem*). In place of the Roman Catholic liturgy, Thompson returned to the Scripture alone to create his text from beginning to end, similar to the Protestant return to *sola scriptura* in the Reformation. Thompson's dramatic dialogue preserved the message of the Bible concerning death and life, but he used its words to deliver the message in an entirely new way.

The fact that the *Requiem* presents this message in the form of a debate adds to its American quality. In contrast to the Requiem Mass text, which is the statement of a particular church, Thompson's *Requiem* text shows conflict and dissent (particularly in Part II), which is a freedom uniquely valued in America. Setting such an important subject by means of dialogue is an original approach compared with those of previous composers who spoke (albeit dramatically) through a creed of a church.

Thompson's creation is individual and independent in its structure, a patchwork of seemingly incongruent pieces assembled into a greater whole. This parallels the story of

the United States, who joined together do build a nation greater than any one of them could be alone. The individual phrases Thompson used meant far less and often something completely different beyond their Biblical contexts until Thompson placed them next to each other in the drama. This assembly was his first great achievement of the work, and the second was the musical setting, which in every way served to support and deepen the meaning of the text.

The *Requiem* can be viewed as more than a neglected work—it is Randall Thompson's masterpiece in text selection and setting. Thompson assembled an original libretto from a wide variety of Biblical passages, creating a cohesive musical structure and personal reflection on death. Each phrase of text is expertly set in terms of prosody, affect, and dramatic purpose, resulting in a uniquely American interpretation of the Requiem form. A work as finely crafted, deeply personal, and thoroughly American in spirit as the *Requiem* deserves to be heard again.

Chapter 10: Recommendations for Performance and Implications for Future Research

Recommendations for Performance

Thompson's *Requiem* has proved to be a work of excellent quality and worthy of revival for contemporary choirs. It is important to briefly review the reasons why it did not achieve success initially and offer suggestions for performing the work in the future. Why has it received so few performances? The factors hindering the *Requiem*'s success are both internal and external, but the external factors were far more powerful.

Internal musical factors

Opening the cover of the *Requiem* for the first time is enough to give a conductor pause. Not only is the score large, it also shows not two, but three choirs at the outset (fig. 10.1). Looking one level closer shows that the distribution of parts is even more difficult—two of the choirs are the product of dividing a single choir, producing a virtual 16-part *divisi* necessary to perform the work. This extended *divisi* alone, without considering the difficulty of the individual parts, requires a large choir with individual singers that can sing with independence.

The requirement of many voice parts puts this piece out of reach for many of the choirs who most frequently performed Thompson's earlier compositions. For the twenty years before the *Requiem*, Thompson had become known to choirs mainly through the *Alleluia*, which is a small work that can be performed by a student or adult choir of almost any size and ability. *The Peaceable Kingdom*, *Alleluia*, and *The Last Words of David* were Thompson's most well-known compositions at that point, but the *Requiem* requires a larger

and more skilled choir than any of those pieces. Each of the three pieces mentioned were written for secular organizations, but were sacred in content, so were thus sung by many amateur church choirs. The *Requiem* was written for a very large university choir, so its difficulty level was beyond the size or ability of many of Thompson's amateur patrons.

If a choir did have sufficient membership to accommodate the *divisi*, how difficult is the *Requiem* musically? When reflecting on the overall difficulty of the *Requiem*, Thompson said: "There is no denying that it is a long and difficult work, tho I tried not to make it so. It is not so difficult, notewise, as many shorter works. Emotionally, however, it is extremely taxing, owing to the overwhelming beauty and intensity of the Biblical text."²⁶³ In this, Thompson is correct—the individual vocal lines are not any more difficult than those in his other works, and it is not unusual for a choir to sing a number of short a cappella works in concert. However, when all of the shorter works are tied together emotionally, with no intermission or other break, the vocal and emotional endurance required increases the challenge significantly. In discussing the background (Chapter 2), several letters were referenced showing conductors balking at the overall difficulty, not the quality, of the *Requiem*.²⁶⁴

Aside from the size of the choir needed and the length of the work, there was also the issue of programming options. Any piece can be seen as more practical for a choir to purchase if they can perform it in several different ways. Comparing *The Peaceable Kingdom* to the *Requiem* from this standpoint illustrates this decision well. *The*

²⁶³ Randall Thompson to Elliot Forbes, May 8, 1959, Randall Thompson papers and family papers (*85-M70, Box 28: Folder "University of California Commission"), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

²⁶⁴ Harold Schmidt to Randall Thompson, May 6, 1958, Randall Thompson papers and family papers (*85-M70, Box 14: Folder "Schmidt, Harold"), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Peaceable Kingdom is eight movements, and though it is more powerful and cohesive as a complete work, each of the movements rely on the others little enough that most can be performed separately. Consequently, when a choir purchases that work, they can view it as purchasing several pieces that can be used over a course of years. The *Requiem* can be performed in part as well, but most movements have such specific dramatic purposes that they make little sense separated from their context.²⁶⁵ It is unlikely that a choir would purchase the *Requiem* unless they were planning to perform the entire work.

Examining the programmability for specific types of ensembles shows the *Requiem* to be an odd fit for many of the most likely performers. For church choirs specifically, even with a large enough membership, they often do not have the rehearsal time necessary to prepare an hour-long a cappella work, especially if there were little opportunity to use parts of the work as weekly anthems. A similar issue exists for a university ensemble, who would need to commit most of a semester to preparing the *Requiem*, to the exclusion of any other repertoire. The only other type of amateur choir who would have the size and capacity to prepare the *Requiem* is an adult community ensemble, such as a symphony or oratorio chorus. The most significant challenge for them would be their general preference for accompanied music.

Even with the challenges of ensemble type, size, and ability level, the lack of performances in the *Requiem*'s history is difficult to explain looking only at the music. There were certainly more choirs in the United States who could have mounted a performance if they chose to, but in the end, only five performances took place in fifteen years. Internal musical characteristics are not enough to explain this neglect.

²⁶⁵ Several sections of the work were published separately and work well as extractions, which include four movements from Part V and all of Part IV as a unit. Only one movement from all of parts I-III was published separately (*Good tidings to the meek*).

External factors

There are two major external factors that contributed to the *Requiem*'s lack of success, each with several facets. The first is the place of the *Requiem* within the context of Randall Thompson's catalogue of works, and the second is a collection of issues regarding the publication of the work. Together, these factors outweigh the influence of the internal musical factors, and thus kept the *Requiem* from achieving the success it deserved.

Position in Thompson's output

Thompson's list of sacred compositions that offer performance alternatives to the *Requiem*, and the timing of several other large secular works contributed to the *Requiem* receiving little attention from directors. In the 1950s and 1960s, Thompson's music was extremely popular with choirs and directors, but the *Requiem* was easily passed over for other more practical options from Thompson's catalogue. At the time, many choirs knew Thompson through *Alleluia* and *The Last Words of David*, both small octavo pieces. If these same choirs sought a large sacred work from him, *The Peaceable Kingdom* and the *Mass of the Holy Spirit* (which was written only one year before the *Requiem*) would be much more practical options in terms of length, difficulty, and extraction options. The thematic similarities between *The Peaceable Kingdom* and *Requiem* would easily make the shorter work seem to be a comparable (and less daunting) alternative.

Of all of Thompson's other works, the timing of *Frostiana* was the least advantageous for the success of the *Requiem*. Thompson had accepted the commission for *Frostiana* during the spring of 1959 (when the *Requiem* premiered at Harvard), and it was premiered the following fall. The enthusiasm for *Frostiana* was immediate, and it

received many performances during the early 1960s. During the same period of time that Thompson was trying to build a reputation for the *Requiem*, it was overshadowed by another larger work that was easier, more tuneful, and more flexible in performance options.²⁶⁶ The distraction produced by *Frostiana* was compounded by Thompson's writing another dramatic sacred work, *The Nativity According to St. Luke*, in 1961. Though it fails to see regular performance today, *The Nativity* was performed many times during the 1960s, and since it is a more practical undertaking, it supplanted the *Requiem* in the "large dramatic sacred work" category.

Publication Issues

The publication history of the *Requiem* was addressed in the background section (Chapter 2) and revealed some practical matters that contributed to the *Requiem* being perceived as an impractical piece to program. To review, the most influential publication issues were:

1. The five-year interval between the premiere performances and the publication of the engraved score
2. The availability of a facsimile score that satisfied the initial enthusiasm generated by the premier performance, at a far lower price than the published score
3. The lack of a quality recording for marketing purposes
4. The high retail price of the score

²⁶⁶ In terms of flexibility, any of the seven movements in *Frostiana* can be performed separately, with piano accompaniment or with orchestra, and some of the movements require only men's or women's voices.

Possible Solutions

In an attempt to alleviate the internal musical issues discussed, offering the most appropriate ensembles and performance situations for the *Requiem* are the most helpful suggestions. Many of the other internal factors either no longer apply or have been reduced in their influence since the 1960s. Solving the external issues is more difficult, as the several publication options that could help remain entirely at the publisher's discretion, but those possible options are provided as well.

Who should perform the *Requiem*? Though many different choirs of several types are capable of performing the work, there are some for which it would be most appropriate. It is a lengthy work that employs wide vocal ranges and requires a large choir. Due to the a cappella writing and significant *divisi*, the choir must also have a large quotient of singers that can sing with great independence. For all of these reasons, it is a poor fit for high school ensembles and most church choirs. Large community ensembles would be better, but often perform only accompanied music. Other adult ensembles, such as professional chamber ensembles (or semi-professional), could perform the *Requiem* musically, but are generally small and would choose a piece with less *divisi*. While there are groups of all of these types that should perform the *Requiem*, there is one type of ensemble that would be most appropriate: college/university choirs. Their combination of high skill-level, vocal maturity, adequate rehearsal time, and flexible programming options make them an excellent match.

Finding an advantageous performance situation would make performing the *Requiem* possible for even more choirs. The *Requiem* offers a unique advantage in this respect with the independent nature of Choirs I and II in the composition. Because the

music for Choirs I and II is generally so distinct, it makes sense for them to rehearse separately for much of the rehearsal process. From a practical standpoint, then, the *Requiem* is an excellent work for not one, but two different mixed choirs to perform, each having prepared the music for either Choir I or II. The challenges of significant *divisi*, length of the work, and number of singers needed are all greatly reduced. For each choir involved, there are some movements that would not need to be rehearsed at all, and they could each rehearse in primarily four-part *divisi* rather than eight. Dramatically, each choir would only need to develop one of the two characters. And, while the *divisi* may be challenging but possible for the typical university choir of 60-80 members, it becomes wholly possible for 120-160 combined singers.

This “divide and conquer” approach makes the *Requiem* possible for many more choirs, and is an excellent collaborative opportunity. It is also not without precedent. Though the entire work has never been performed by an assembly of different mixed choirs, “The Garment of Praise” was performed by fourteen assembled choirs at the 1964 Intercollegiate Choral Festival at the University of North Carolina–Greensboro. The organizer of the festival, Richard Cox, told the directors of the various choirs that they were welcome to prepare only one of the two choirs if they so desired.²⁶⁷ With this approach as at least an option, the *Requiem* is an ideal work for single collaborative concerts with two or more choirs, or as part of a larger festival.

The remaining internal factors are significantly reduced in effect because of their relationship to the timing of the *Requiem*’s release. Now that fifty years have passed, the

²⁶⁷ Richard Cox to Randall Thompson, February 27, 1964, Randall Thompson papers and family papers (*85-M70, Box 5: Folder “Cox, Richard”), Houghton Library, Harvard University. “If any director would like to prepare only the chorus I or the chorus II part throughout this work and I will arrange for a group of comparable size to balance on the other part.”

compositions that were published around the time of the *Requiem* (such as *Frostiana*) have little power to overshadow it other than in their continued popularity today.

What could be done about the publication challenges? The price of the score for the *Requiem* remains the most significant hindrance to choirs wishing to perform the work. At \$44.00, a performance with only 60-80 singers would require thousands of dollars for the scores alone. In the 1960s, E. C. Schirmer did attempt to make the *Requiem* more marketable by offering a string orchestra accompaniment (doubling the voice parts), printing in a smaller format, and at least considered the idea of keeping scores on a rental basis.²⁶⁸ If the score were smaller, or distributed differently, it could be less expensive. Fifty years later, the options have expanded with new and emerging technology:

1. Providing other types of scores could reduce the page-count and thus the cost of the scores. Choir-specific scores with only the music for Choir I or Choir II would be the most practical option. Additional types of scores, such as all choral parts with no piano reduction, are also possible.
2. Electronic distribution of musical scores is now possible and could make printing the expensive score unnecessary, or at least independent from the publisher.
3. Renting scores and offering a string orchestra accompaniment are still both possible.

In an interview with Robert Schuneman, president of E. C. Schirmer, I asked about the viability of these various options for the *Requiem*.²⁶⁹ He said that though they

²⁶⁸ Robert MacWilliams to Randall Thompson, January 16, 1966, Randall Thompson papers and family papers (*85-M70 Box 15: Folder "Schirmer Music Company"), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

²⁶⁹ Robert Schuneman, interview with author, January 14, 2011.

were offered, there is no record of the string orchestra parts ever being made, much less rented. The reference to the available parts, which appeared in the 1963 published score, has been removed from the current publication, and there are no plans to make them.

Renting scores is also not feasible, because the scores generally need to be replaced after about two rentals, resulting in a rental price that was high enough to be unmarketable.²⁷⁰

The idea of choir-specific scores may bring down the price, but suffers from a different problem: the necessity of re-engraving the entire score. Re-engraving is easier today, with computers rather than actual engravers, but doing so for a score as lengthy and detailed as the *Requiem* would be a prohibitively expensive prospect.²⁷¹

Schuneman did express interest in seeing the *Requiem* performed again, though. Because the work has never been recorded in studio, he has occasionally considered producing a recording, but the expense necessary has always been too great for a work that is not currently generating any revenue. Knowing that the price of the printed score is a serious obstacle, he believes that *Requiem* has its best chance of selling through electronic distribution.²⁷²

Implications for Future Research

This analysis of Thompson's *Requiem* provides seeds for future research into his music and its compositional heritage, the *Requiem*'s place in the realm of Requiem compositions, Thompson's other dramatic works, and Thompson's ultimate influence on American music after his time. The *Requiem* is a work with no direct peer in Thompson's

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

output, nor in 20th-century American music in general. By assembling his text as a pastiche from the Bible, in the form of an unaccompanied dramatic dialogue, Thompson created an individual sacred genre that has not been duplicated. A more thorough investigation of this work and its ultimate secular models could reveal more specific ties between Thompson's text setting and that of the great madrigalists of the late Renaissance.

Thompson's *Requiem* also joins a number of other Requiem settings that dispense with the Roman Catholic liturgical text and are built on their own libretto. The historical relationship between this work and other Requiem settings is beyond the scope of this study, but a prime avenue for future research. A worthy study could establish the early Requiem tradition of American composers independent of European traditions.

Text setting has proven to be one of Thompson's greatest strengths as a composer, and it would be useful this attribute in his other works. Of particular interest could be his two other dramatic sacred works, *The Passion According to St. Luke* and *The Nativity According to St. Luke*. Though they are both written for standard oratorio forces, Thompson's skill in creating dramatic intensity through his text setting may also be present in these neglected works. Did Thompson's text setting skill apply to foreign languages as well? He set few non-English texts, but the most significant collection is found in the *Odes of Horace*, written in Latin.

An entire generation of composers has lived since Thompson died, and because his music is still popular with choirs today, it is also an appropriate time to evaluate the effect of his musical language on the next generation of composers. Has his musical language found its way into their compositions? Is his music still involved in defining an

American choral tradition? The fact that so much of his music is still being sung regularly by American choirs encourages this future investigation.

Conclusion

Randall Thompson was a great craftsman, and in writing the *Requiem* showed his remarkable skill in the art of text setting. The *Requiem* was the result of a confluence of inspiration and opportunity unlike any that Thompson experienced in his career. In assembling his own libretto from the Bible, Thompson was able to craft every feature of the work, including the text. He joined the text with music that enhanced its meaning and dramatic effect through prosody, symbolism, and careful creation of affect. Through this careful construction, Thompson took phrases from their original contexts and gave them new meanings within the drama he wished to write. The resulting work is one of the first works by an American composer in the Requiem genre, and is in many ways conceptually American. This document has shown that the *Requiem*'s lack of success was driven primarily by external factors, not a lack of musical excellence, and it deserves to be heard again. Even so, Thompson was not as concerned with how long his music would endure after he was gone. He achieved his goal of artfully supporting beautiful texts with music when he wrote the *Requiem*.

Well, I don't think much about my afterlife in the musical world. There's nothing immortal in that sphere. And I'm not interested in my endurance. I write out of an inner necessity and love for music. And in the case of choral music, in love with beautiful texts. I want to see what I can do that will be halfway worthy of a beautiful poem or beautiful verses.²⁷³

²⁷³ McGilvray, "The choral music of Randall Thompson," 285.

APPENDIX A

Dates of completion for movements of *Requiem*

Movement	Date as written in score	Dates
I. Lamentations	20-28-XI-'57	November 20-28, 1957
II:1 Why make ye this ado?	29-30-XI-'57	November 29-30, 1957
II:2 What man is he?	1-14-XII-'57	December 1-14, 1957
II:3 Good tidings to the meek	16-18-XII-'57	December 16-18, 1957
III:1 Be filled with the spirit	28-XII-'57 – 1-I-'58	December 28, 1957 – January 1, 1958
III:2 O let the nations be glad	11-17-I-'58	January 11-17, 1958
III:3 Sing unto Him	2-6-I-'58	January 2-6, 1958
III:4 Utter a song	18-24-'58	January 18-24, 1958
IV: 1 Sing with the sprit	13-II-'58	February 13, 1958
IV:2/3 Let everything that hath breath	16-18-II-'58	February 16-18, 1958
IV:4 Praise Him all ye stars	18-21-II-'58	February 18-21, 1958
IV:5 I am their music	21-II-'58	February 21, 1958
V:1 Ye were sometimes darkness	10-14-III-'58	March 10-14, 1958
V:2 The Lord shall be	15-III-'58	March 15, 1958
V:3 Return unto thy rest	16-III-'58	March 16, 1958
V:4 Thou hast given him	17-III-'58	March 17, 1958
V:5 Amen and amen, alleluia	18-21-III-'58	March 18-21, 1958

Source: Randall Thompson, *Requiem: for double chorus of mixed voices, unaccompanied*, (Boston: E. C. Schirmer, 1958).

Dates are indicated at the end of each section in the manuscript score below the final measure. They were included in the engraved score as well, in the same location. This was not unusual, as there are similar date markings on nearly all of Thompson's manuscript scores, almost always in the format (Arabic numeral, day)-(Roman numeral, month)-(Arabic numeral, year).

APPENDIX B

Comparison of Indicated tempos in the Corrected Manuscript Score, Engraved Score, and the performed tempos by the Harvard Glee Club and Radcliffe Choral Society in April, 21, 1959 (a performance that Thompson advised).

Movement	Manuscript Score	Engraved Score	1959 Recorded Tempo
I. Lamentations	60	60	52-54
II:1 Why make ye this ado?	88	88	78-82
II:2 What man is he?	100/50/Meno	100/50/88	84/42-48/72
II:3 Good Tidings	Largo: 50	Poco andante: 60	48-50
III:1 Be filled with the spirit	60	60	54
III:2 O let the nations	Ca. 56/50	Ca. 63/50	58-60/50
III:3 Sing unto Him	100	92	86-94
III:4 Utter a song	80/63/84/63	80/63/76/63	70/65/69/56
IV: 1 Sing with the sprit	52	52	50
IV:2 Let everything that hath breath	80/80	80/92	88-90/69
IV:3(2b) Let them give glory	72/66	72/66	76/63
IV:3b Multitude of Isles	92	88	112
IV:4 Praise Him all ye stars	88/54/92/80	88/54/92/80	76/58-60/84-92/76-80
IV: I am their music	52	52	52
V:1 Ye were sometimes darkness*	56/66/A Tempo	56/66/Tempo 1	44-48/56-62/56
V:2 The Lord shall be	NM/segue	48	38
V:3 Return unto thy rest	Poco adagio	Poco adagio, 54	56-63/54
V:4 Thou hast given him	Lento e tranquillo	Lento e tranquillo, 50-54	58
V:5 Amen and amen, alleluia	Allegro moderato, 80(160)	Allegro moderato, 96	100

*This movement is the only case where a tempo change from the corrected manuscript was not updated in the engraved score. The tempo [half-note = 66] was handwritten [half-note = 48-50] in the corrected manuscript.

Randall Thompson, *Requiem*, Harvard Glee Club and Radcliffe Choral Society, dir. Elliot Forbes, Technicord T15-16, 1959.

APPENDIX C

Full text of “Music, a Mirror,” speech given by Randall Thompson at Princeton University, May 22, 1946

Source:

Randall Thompson, “Music: a Mirror,” (lecture, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, May 22 1946), in Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers (*85-M70, Box 33: Folder “Music, a mirror”), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

This transcript was taken from an original handwritten copy of the speech.

Music, a Mirror.

R.T.

May 22, '46

D.P.H. - Princeton

As students wrapped up in the Humanities, I feel it safe to assume that you are deeply and perhaps even primarily – interested in the Arts. And since you are interested in the Arts, I will go further and say that you are interested in Music. Some of you may know little about it; some of you may – so far have some understandable aversion to it. But I prefer to posit your interest in it or I should be ignoring your presence here tonight. If I am wrong. So everyone who is not interested in music leave the house at once. Or as Lorenzo de' Medici said “*Chi moe e innamorato, esci da questo ballo!*” Let him who is not in love, leave the ballroom. If you stay, it is only plain courtesy of me to assume that you are interested in – if not in love with – music. I am not going to talk about music as an endless subject for scholarly research in all its theoretical, analytical, historical, and esthetic aspects. I shall make no attempt to persuade you of the validity of music. I shall not attempt to lure you by its appeal. I shall not exhibit music to you as a one might show you a picture of a pretty girl, or make any attempt to woo you with music's all-too-apparent charms. That would be to undercut the other subjects which are of concert to you and – what is worse – would undercut Music, in the sense that it has any real meaning for you or me or the next man as an element of maturity or growth or civilization. Or, in other words, that the subject is of any importance to you or me or the next man as an element in education or growth or civilization .

I posit your interest in Music – your willingness to understand it to the extent of your powers. I posit also your wider interest in education, maturity, growth, understanding – in that in civilization: in civilized man opposed to the beast.

They are a primary interest of yours, the Liberal Arts – the arts which a free man and not a slave is privileged to study, and to know and love, because it is a part of his human birthright.

And so, since Music is one of the Liberal Arts and has been recognized as such since time immemorial (1100 a.d. at the University of Paris and since 1935 in Princeton) I am relieved of all responsibility of persuading you of its validity as a Liberal Art; of any endeavor to try to make you like it or even understand it. My only obligation as I see it, is to define – or re-define, the nature of Music in its function in human life that makes it a

time-honored subject for serious consideration, or contemplation, or downright adoration, by civilized men and women in various walks of life.

There is one other thing which I feel which must be posited; which every one of you – as students of the Humanities believe, and that is that all we ever study or can study is History. We can't 'study' the present apart from the past; we can only analyze it. We can't 'study' the future, we can only prognosticate or prophesy. What we really do when we study is we try to find out how Man behaved under certain circumstances, which we try to ascertain as accurately as possible, and why he behaved as he did and what the meaning of his behavior is for us, in an environment which, however different in exterior details, remains, and always will remain, the same.

We try, in short, to relive the ages that are past, to extend our lives backwards; to grow more mature by experiencing synthetically what otherwise might be experienced only by living to a ripe old age; so that at 25, instead of being callow and full of petty and juvenile misconceptions and prejudices, we may have sloughed them off and attained, in youth, something of the breadth and experience of the man of mature years, who, even without opportunity and privilege, knows what life is about; who has gained by the long, hard way, ripeness, ability, sanity, courage, humor, sympathy in his human relationships, and in the performance of his duties. I posit your interest in the arts; and therefore in music; and in History as a summation of the whole curriculum. From this point, and from this angle, let us consider what Music signifies and what its role is in the solemn task of rounding out what we call the 'whole man'.

I chose as title of my talk tonight, Music, a mirror. When I did so I was thinking of the saying which many of you may know: One art, many mirrors. (*ars una, species mille*). A saying that rightly supports the thesis that all of the arts – though they differ in manner of presentation – have the same objective, namely to interpret nature, and, at least in part, human nature in its various manifestations. See the Arts wrestle with the problem of form and content. Architecture; painting of objects, scenes, and abstractions, deal in more or less recognizable shapes and forms; but poetry, drama, literature in general; the dance, and music deal with human beings or the emotions by which they live, breathe, and have their being.

Of all the arts music is probably the least understood. One can say of a painting that 'one leg is shorter than another.' One can say of a building 'that Palladian window throws everything out of scale,' One can say of a dancer that he or she is simply 'yearning' throughout and not *being*. One can say of a poet that his rhymes are false, his sentiment is maudlin, his similes–forced. But it is hard to put one's finger on what is wrong with a certain piece of music – and I will tell you confidently, that there is, often, something wrong with it.

But most of the time, there is nothing wrong with it. However badly it may be performed, the music itself – *das Ding an Sich* – is good. And professionals as well as laymen will do well to think first of all about the music and only secondly about the way it is performed.

Why is Music worth serious consideration by a student of the Humanities?

Because a human being is, and always has been – part head and part heart; and music – perhaps more than any other art is a record – not only of the brains of great thinkers of the past, but also an expression of their great hearts.

History – all that we ever study – is not just battles, dates, names of kings in chronological order. It is also – I might even say, primarily – an inquiry (which history means, literally) – an inquiry into the way men felt and into the feelings which made them act the way they did.

You could be a great statesman, or a great diplomat, or a great inventor, or a great artist. If you were, it would be a serious matter, not only what you know (in a factual way) but also how you feel. We don't read 'Julius Caesar' to learn what the dates of his battles were or what day he was murdered on. We don't read *Don Quixote* to know what happened in Spain in the 16th Century. We don't read *Faust* to learn the externals of what happened to one particular man in adverse circumstances at a certain period of his life.

We read, we look, we listen in hopes of finding out what they feel, what it was in their feeling that made them act as they did; what was constructive and beautiful and right in their feeling, and what was destructive and ugly and wrong.

Music is primarily what was constructive and beautiful and right in the feelings of its creators. Great Music is statement – positive statement.

The greatest composers have left us a heritage of their feelings. And the easiest and most accessible to us, the most readily comprehended, are the feelings which one might call 'concrete.'

Music holds as many records of deep feeling as any other art and is, if anything, more intense in its power of communication of those feelings.

Take, for example, Michelangelo's *Pieta*. Most of you know it. As you go into St. Peter's you pause at the little chapel on the right and gaze speechless. It means tenderness. It means sacrifice. It means suffering. It means strength, triumph, submission, peace – qualities all of us want to know and to recognize in a high and beautiful form as a sort of measure and criterion of strength, triumph, submission, peace; suffering, sacrifice, tenderness.

Without excluding the Michelangelo or in any way depreciating it, let us draw a comparison with the *Crucifixus* of the B minor mass. Here there is no visual representation; only aural imagery, only pure feeling, pure sound. And yet to hear the *Crucifixus* is virtually to be present at the death of Our Lord. What Bach felt about that moment in history is so deep, so overwhelming, so incandescently, universally human that no mere narration or portrait or sculpture or poem could surpass it.

But while we are talking about the *Pieta* and the *Crucifixus*, let's confine ourselves to Death, which after all concerns all of us, and our attitudes towards it is of vital concern to all of us. *Nascentes moriturum*. 'In the morning we are in death.' No-one can read Plato or the Shakespeare *Sonnets* or John Donne or Lucilas or Emily Dickinson or Houseman without facing some aspect of death. And no-one would deny that to read them was an element of education for life.

What bearing has music on the subject? In general, I would say, two kinds: one, the historical (the perception of what other generations feel) and the other, the enlargement of one's own feelings or even perhaps the creation of them.

The *Crucifixus* of Bach is a sort of monument of suffering and peace. But in 'God's time is Best' Bach pictures death as the implacable; thus as salvation for those who have earned it; and thus as peace and jubilation justly earned. The experience of these conceptions enrich our comprehension of the world. But what about death as it appears in the *Eroica* Symphony of Beethoven? There, there is grief-human and then a

glimpse of a country unstained by grief or struggle – not just a ‘heaven’ either, but a strong kind of happiness, – powerful, passionate, sublime.

How did a great mind like Brahms feel about the Grim Reaper? He saw the vanity of human wishes; all that was transitory was only a likeness; his portrayal of the after-life in *The Song of Fate* was of a kind of Persian loveliness and light; for the *Requiem* he portrays a kind of comfortable heaven in which ordinary persons (not necessarily *heros*) find solace eternal.

How did R. Strauss feel about Death and about Transfiguration? Tho’ living still – in 1946 – he is essentially a late 19th century figure and what he had to say on the subject is both an index to his epoch and – according to one’s taste; an image of the truth. In his tone-poem, an ordinary man dies and his soul goes to heaven, with harps strumming and trumpets blaring.

What does the *Dies Irae* in its wonderful plainsong setting dating from the 12th century tell us about death? It is one of the greatest poems ever written. Probably no poem ever had a wider influence, and it was and is, continually sung: What does Isolde tell us, dying for love over the dead form of her lover? What does Aida convey to us, stifling in the tomb? What does Melisande tell us when, dying, she extends her arms toward the newborn child she is too weak to hold? ‘*L’esr la lutte de la mire coute...*’ and heads off.

These are all different aspects of death, all given to us in what, ultimately, amounts to pure feeling about the subject – an element which is now and always has been recognized by all except pedants as indispensable to any genuine understanding or comprehension.

I have talked chiefly about music that has words – vocal music, choral music, which happens to be as great as any music ever written. But there is a whole body of music, as you know, which has no words. What of this? And is it of any importance to us who are interested in human beings and the way they behave? True, a whole body of music is devoted to quite intangible, untranslatable human emotions. It does not tell any ‘story.’ It is just *music*; marvelously wrought, strangely moving.

Is this not too vague? You may ask; ‘We are interested in stuff that we can relate to other subjects or tie in literally, with our own immediate perceptions, theories, creeds.

It *is* vague; it is intangible. By the expert, it can be analyzed down to the last 1/16 note, but its meaning, in the strict sense, cannot be put into words, any more than a painting can be put into words. Perhaps this is because it begins where words leave off. Perhaps it is because there is such a thin as human expression which transcends the meaning of all words. At least one can say that it represents the outpouring of a vast body of men’s minds, – men who lived and thought and felt with style, (Aldous Huxley – in *Texts and Pretext*) – who used artifice only to convey content, who cared about content more than they valued their own lives and sought, through what they wrote, to make other lives more truly worth living. And if one wanted to be very exacting and ask ‘what does it matter to me, a student of the Humanities?’ one could always reply ‘The very fact that so many musicians through the ages have devoted their lives to such an expression makes of it a human phenomenon, one kind of *mirror* of humankind.’ This mirror, in fact, – devoid of all connotations such as birth, life, love, fate, tragedy, melancholy, joy, death, transfiguration – this mirror, I say, that gleams in music as in no other art, is as high – as supreme – an expression as the human spirit is capable of.

If really pressed to the wall by those who find it too indefinite, too little factual, too vague – lacking the capacity in themselves to comprehend the conceptions of their fellow men – one can always say (rather quietly, like the gentleman in Terence): ‘I am a man. I count nothing human indifferent to me.’

APPENDIX D

General description and informal listing of the Randall Thompson Collection at Houghton Library, Harvard University

The collection of Randall Thompson materials at the Houghton Library, Harvard University, is in two parts. The first gift to the library was a collection of manuscript scores that Randall Thompson assembled and gave to the library in 1978. For those manuscripts, Houghton Library has a detailed finding aid available on the library website.²⁷⁴ The second gift came to Houghton from the Thompson family in 1985, after Randall Thompson had died. It is a voluminous collection of letters, scrapbooks, musical scores, family and professional documents, and other miscellaneous items. This specific collection (call number *85-M70, “Randall Thompson Papers and Family Papers”) is referenced many times in this study, as it contains more historical primary source material about Thompson and his life than any other archive in the world. Unlike the 1978 collection, however, this collection remains unprocessed, and there is no catalogue of it available.²⁷⁵

Without some sort of reference or guide, efficient research in such a large collection would be nearly impossible, as it includes fifty-four separate boxes that span twenty-nine linear feet of shelf space in the depository. Though it is not very specific at all, there is an internal listing at the Houghton Library that lists brief titles for each of the fifty-four boxes, which reveal their contents somewhat. Most of the boxes contain several

²⁷⁴ The manuscript collection can be found under the call number “b MS mus173.” A link to the permanent record: <http://discovery.lib.harvard.edu/?itemid=|library/m/aleph|000602189> (accessed April 2, 2011).

²⁷⁵ Carl Schmidt, whose writings are also referenced several times in this document, is currently working on an exhaustive catalogue of the entire catalogue with the help of his wife, Betsey. Presently, the catalogue is not published, but it is likely that it will be sometime in the next several years.

folders of letters, documents, or concert programs, and some are large boxes of books and musical scores. What follows is an informal listing of the collection, more descriptive and detailed than the listing of box titles available from Houghton Library.

Randall Thompson Collection Listing. 85M-70

Boxes 1-17 (and 42) are filled with folders full of letters and other correspondence. For each letter there are two general folders: 1939-1966, and 1966-. Letters to and from frequent correspondents are collected in separate named folders. For each box, the title given in the Houghton Library listing is given, followed by a brief description of the contents.

Box numbers:

1) A general-American Academy

List of folders:

1. A general 1939-65
2. A general 1966-
3. Allegheny (College) Dr. WS Wright
4. American Academy in Rome

2) American Choral Foundation-Az

List of folders:

1. American Choral Foundation
2. American Laboratory Theater
3. American Music Center
4. ASCAP
5. ASCAP Royalty Statements
6. American Musicological Society
7. Angel Records (Utah Symphony recording, 1979)
8. Apollo Club (Minneapolis) Concert in 1978
9. Auburn
10. Avery, Myrtilla
11. Autographs

3) B general-Barrgte

List of folders:

1. B general
2. Ba-Bb
3. American Choral Review, Alfred Durr
4. Bach Festival
5. Bb-Bo

6. Br-
7. Ballantine, Edward
8. Ballard, William, 1966-
9. Ballard Family
10. Ballard - San Francisco
11. Band
12. Barbirolli, NI
13. Barryte, Maurice
14. Barzun, Jauques

4) Bc-Bz

List of folders:

1. Beatley, Catherine
2. Behrend, Jeanne
3. Bernstein, Leonard
4. Biddle, Constance
5. Biggs, John and Salli
6. Birchard, C. C. and company
7. Blankarn, Marshall
8. Blue Cross/Blue Shield
9. Bok, Derek
10. Bok, Mrs. Edward
11. Boston Symphony Orchestra
12. Bouvard, Jacques
13. Brown, Elaine
14. Bradley, James
15. Bridgeport, University of
16. BMI
17. Bryan, Charles
18. Butterworth, CE (Ted)

5) C general-Curtis

List of folders:

1. C general
2. California, University of
3. Cantrell, Burton
4. Cassini (in Italian)
5. Cambridge School of Ballet
6. CBS (Solomon and Balkis production 1942)
7. Chapin School, NYC
8. Christ Church
9. Epworth-Euclid United Methodist Church, Cleveland
10. Club of Odd Volumes
11. CBS Records
12. Columbia University
13. Coolidge, Elizabeth Sprague

14. Concord Commission
15. Copland, Aaron
16. University of North Carolina/Cox, Richard
17. Curtis Institute

6) Contracts-D general, + Di – Fischer (rest of D in Box 42)

List of folders:

1. Contracts (ECS Royalty contracts, ASCAP, TIAA Cref, etc.)
2. D general 1939-1966
3. D general 1966-
4. DiBaldo Family
5. Dickinson, George
6. Drinker, Henry
7. Dodds, Harold
8. DuPage

6a) E (6a is not referenced in the Houghton Library listing)

List of folders:

1. E general 1966-
2. E general 1939-66
3. Eastman School of Music
4. Evans, John
5. F general 1966-
6. F general 1939-1966
7. Fischer, Carl

7) Foote-H general

List of folders:

1. Foote, Arthur
2. Forbes, Elliot
3. Fransiscus, Rosie (Thompson)
4. Fredonia State University College
5. Friends of Swizerland
6. G General, 1939-1966
7. G General 1966-
8. Garden
9. Geschwind, Gilman, Grahame (Kenneth)
10. Greene, David
11. Gstaad
12. H general 1939-66
13. H general 1966-

8) Haggmann-I

List of folders:

1. Haar, James
2. Haggman

3. Hammond, Mason
4. Hallstrom, Henry
5. Hanson, Howard
6. Hartford
7. Harvard gifts
8. Heath, Fenno
9. Heifetz, Jascha
10. Heilman, William
11. Helm, Everett
12. Hindemith, Paul
13. Hines, Robert
14. Hofer, Philip
15. Horace
16. House 1939-40
17. Hovahness, Alan
18. Howe, M. A. DeWolfe
19. I general 1939-66
20. I general 66-
21. Illingworth, D
22. Illinois Wesleyan
23. Insurance 1939-41
24. J general
25. Jacobi, Irene and Fred
26. Jacobson, Joshua
27. BU Medical Report, 1977
28. Julliard

9) K-League

List of folders:

1. K general
2. Kentucky Music Educators Association
3. Kerman, Joseph
4. King, Chris
5. King's Chapel
6. Koussevitsky, Serge
7. L general
8. La Jolla Presbyterian Church
9. Lawton, Edward
10. League of Composers

10) Leinsdorf-Mannes, D

List of folders:

1. Leinsdorf, Erich
2. Leonard, Claire
3. Lederman, Minna
4. Music Library (dedication of)

5. LA City School Dist
6. Lincoln, NE
7. Love Songs for Cecily and Dan
8. Long Island
9. The Lutheran Hour
10. M general
11. Mc
12. McCord, David
13. McDougal, Edward
14. MacDowell Association
15. McFarland, Ross, Emily
16. Mahler, Fritz
17. Malipiero (in Italian)
18. Mann, Alfred
19. Mann, John and Adrian
20. Mannes, David

11) Mannes, L-Moraschini

List of folders:

1. Mannes, Leopold Damrosch (from Thompson, to)
2. Mannes, Leopold Damrosch (from Mannes)
3. Marby, William L.
4. Martin, George
5. Mason, Daniel Gregory
6. Mass of the Holy Spirit
7. Mechem, Kirke
8. Merritt, Tillman
9. Meur, Alfred (categorized incorrectly, actually "Alfred Mann" letters)
10. MENC
11. Milton Academy
12. Moe, Henry Allen
13. Monteaux, Pierre
14. Montgomery, Bruce
15. Moore, Douglas
16. Moraschini, Fratelli

12) N general-P general

List of folders:

1. N general 1966-
2. N general 1939-1966
3. Nashville Symphony
4. National Institute of Arts and Letters
5. Nazareth College of Rochester
6. NBC
7. Nelson, Paul
8. Neumann, Alfred

9. New England Conservatory
10. New Orleans
11. Newcomb, John L.
12. Newspaper clippings
13. Norfolk
14. Notes (in *The Musical Quarterly*)
15. O general
16. Ormandy, Eugene
17. P general 1966-
18. P general 1939-66

13) Paderewski-Rusch

List of folders:

1. Paderewski Fund
2. Paranjoti
3. Peabody
4. Pennsylvania, University of
5. Perera, Ronald
6. Perry, Lewis
7. Piston, Walter
8. Porteus, Morgan
9. Postcards
10. Powers
11. Pratt, Harry
12. Princeton University
13. Queens College
14. R general 1939-66
15. R general 1966-
16. Raleigh, NC
17. Reiner, Fritz
18. Richey, Mrs. Homer
19. Richmond, VA
20. Richmond Area University Center
21. Rocky Ridge Music Center
22. Ropes, Gray
23. Rouner, Arthur
24. Rusch family

14) S general-Schirmer, E. C.

List of folders:

1. S general 1966-
2. S general 1939-66
3. Self, William
4. Saunders, Neil
5. San Diego (First United Methodist)
6. Scheibert, Becky

7. Schein, Ernest
8. Schmidt, Harold
9. E. C. Schirmer

15) Schirmer MC-Tavern

List of folders:

1. Schirmer Music Company
2. See, A
3. Seeger, Charles
4. Sessions, Roger
5. Schweitz, Bruce
6. Signet Society
7. Smith family
8. Snyder, Clarence
9. Social Security
10. Springfield
11. Stokowski, Leopold
12. T general
13. Tampa
14. Tavern Club

16) Teachers-Virginia, University of

List of folders:

- 1) TIAA-Cref
- 2) Thiede, Alex
- 3) Thompson, Randall (80th birthday)
- 4) Thompson, William
- 5) Thomson, Virgil
- 6) Toronto
- 7) Tinchieri, A
- 8) Thurmond, J. M.
- 9) U general 1966-
- 10) Urrows, David Francis
- 11) Varney, Samuel (portrait of)
- 12) V general 1939-66
- 13) Ventura (Italy)
- 14) Varney Portrait
- 15) U general 1939-66
- 16) V general 1966-
- 17) University of Virginia, Oral History Project
- 18) University of Virginia

17) W-Z

List of folders:

1. W general
2. Wykeham Rise

3. The Wind in the Willows
4. Woodworth, G. Wallace
5. Walter, Bruno
6. Wister, Marina
7. Walz, Jay
8. Welch, Dr. Roy
9. Westerberg, Kermit
10. Williamson, Bernhard
11. Wilson, Richard
12. Wintersnight Club
13. Woodworth, Ellery
14. X-Y
15. Yale University
16. Young Bonghy Bo
17. Z

Boxes 18-25 are “scrapbook” boxes, and are arranged by year. In general, each year has its own folder, and the contents are greatly varied. Most of the scrapbook materials are concert programs of performances of Thompson’s music, but there are also additional letters, various documents, awards, and newspaper clippings.

- 18) Scrapbooks 1911-46
- 19) Undated (1920-50) and 1947-50
- 20) 1952-58
- 21) 1959-63
- 22) 1964-65
- 23) 1966-72
- 24) 1973: Letters from Merrick, NY, March 4, 1973
- 25) 1973-75 and Undated

Boxes 26 and 27 are a collection of published copies of Thompson’s music. In general, the copies are in mint condition and contain no markings.

- 26) Printed compositions by RT (A-Passenger)
- 27) Printed compositions by RT (Peaceable-Velvet)

Boxes 28-30 are full of folders pertaining to specific commissions. Most of the documents are letters concerning the commissioning of specific works, but there are also some scrapbook materials relative to premiere performances. Much of the material could just as easily have been filed with the letters or scrapbook materials, so describing the specific content of these “commission” boxes is difficult. In general, the folders are named with respect to the entity commissioning the work, not the work itself or the names of the correspondents.

- 28) Commissions, Amherst-Christ Church
- List of folders:

1. Amherst (*Frostiana*)
2. Christ Church (*The Nativity According to St. Luke*)
3. *Americana* (one page description/program note)
4. Amherst Commission (programs)
5. Amherst Premiere reviews
6. University of California Commission (*Requiem*)
7. University of California Commission (*Requiem* correspondence)
8. Chapin School, NYC (unfinished)
9. Christ Church (commission correspondence)
10. Christ Church (performance of *Nativity* in Evanston, Illinois)
11. Christ Church (reviews of premiere performance)
12. Christ Church (premiere programs)
13. Performance of *Nativity* in Japan December 22, 1965

29) Christ Church-Koussevitsky

List of folders:

1. Koussevitsky (*Alleluia*)
2. Christ Church (Evanston, Illinois performance of *Nativity*; many letters from William Ballard)
3. Christ Church (Evanston, Illinois performance of *Nativity*, programs and reviews)
4. Christ Church (White Plains, New York performance of *Nativity*)
5. Handel and Haydn Society (*The Passion According to St. Luke*)
6. Handel and Haydn International Choral Festival, 1965 (*Passion* premiere)
7. *Passion* premiere
8. *Passion* (University of Tennessee performance, May 6, 1966)
9. Harvard Musical Association (String Quartet No. 2)
10. Hollins College (*The Gate of Heaven*)
11. Kingston, Rhode Island (unfinished)
12. Koussevitzky Music Fund (*A Trip to Nahant*)

30) League-Worcester

List of folders:

1. League of Composers (*Peaceable Kingdom*, empty)
2. Lemann, New England Conservatory (*A Psalm of Thanksgiving*)
3. *Hymn for Scholars* (premiere)
4. Choir School of St. Thomas (*The Place of the Blest*)
5. University of Tennessee (*Passion* performance, 1966)
6. Variano, JFK High School (*Fare Well*)
7. *Ode to the Virginia Voyage* (correspondence)
8. Virginia Commission for the Creative Arts
9. *Ode to the Virginia Voyage* (photos)
10. *Ode to the Virginia Voyage* (premiere)
11. Woodworth Festival (*The Eternal Dove*)
12. Worcester Music Festival (Gettysburg Address setting, unfinished)
13. St. Stephens Church, Providence, Rhode Island (*Mass of the Holy Spirit*)

14. Various (commission offers not fulfilled)

Boxes 31-54 are filled with various items:

- 31) Correspondence w/ Bert and Mildred Bronson, Bronson article reprints
- 32) Harvard musical organizations
Reports and committee meeting notes concerning the review of Harvard Musical Organizations during the 1957-58 academic year.
- 33) Lectures, published statements, other published works 1929-70, also materials from Harvard classroom
List of written speeches:
 - 1. "Music, a mirror," 1946
 - 2. "An evaluation of our musical life," 1937
 - 3. "Music as Religious Expression"
 - 4. "Writing for the amateur chorus," (draft)
 - 5. Daniels Hall Dedication, 1966
 - 6. "Music as a way of life," tribute to Henry S. Drinker.
 - 7. "The function of an artist in a free society"
 - 8. "How to teach and write music at the same time," 1968
 - 9. Draft of application to the Guggenheim Fellowship, 1929
 - 10. Convocation speech, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1966
 - 11. Sixth Annual Scottish Rite Chair Convocation speech, 1966
- 34) Royalty statements
Box containing royalty statements from E. C. Schirmer, Carl Fischer, and ASCAP.
- 35) RT personal copies of Americana, Requiem, etc. Boone, NC, and works in-progress
Mostly personal copies of published scores, with few markings.
- 36) Correspondence A-Z, personal degrees, memberships, photos, etc.
- 37) Extra copies, stage directions for Nativity
- 38) Scrapbooks 1941-42, miscellaneous printed music, framed collage from PK performance
- 39) Thompson family
- 40) Grace Randall Thompson diaries/letters
- 41) Margaret and Randall Thompson, descendants papers

42) D general – Dibaldo

List of folders:

1. diBaldo, Luciano and Paulo (in Italian)
2. Davison, Archibald T.
3. D general
4. Damrosch, Walter
5. Dana, Dorothy
6. Dana, Richard.
7. Davidson, John H.
8. Davis, Kyle Arthur
9. Davis, William
10. Delaware, University of
11. Denison, Barbara.
12. deVaron, Lorna Cooke
13. diBaldo family

43) Miscellaneous papers and books (19th century)

44) Large box of miscellaneous manuscripts

Mostly Randall Thompson manuscripts, some proof copies that had been sent from E. C. Schirmer.

45) Modern editions of motets

Not Randall Thompson music, no markings

46) Phillips books/calendars 1957-83, and some music

47) RT bound copies of his own compositions

48) RT bound copies of his own compositions

Randall Thompson would have personal copies of his music bound in hard covers. The smaller octavo works are bound also, in several collected volumes. No markings.

49) Miscellaneous scores, compositions by others

Some Thompson music, *Loveli-lines*, some concert programs

50) More manuscripts, counterpoint manuscripts, travel

Some teaching materials, letters from Margaret, published articles

51) Printed music, 1900-1920s

Piano and organ scores from childhood

52) Scrapbook 1936 from brother Dan, Nahant/Tarantella

53) Ode to Virginia Voyage, 3 symphonies

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